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UNDER COVER

A Play in Four Acts

BY

ROI COOPER MEGRUE

Under Cover

A Melodrama

In Four Acts

by

ROI COOPER MEGRUE

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To the loveliest lady in the world—

MY MOTHER.

MAY 11 1914

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.. Under Cover ..

The Cast

In the Order of their First Appearance.

JAMES DUNCAN, Assistant to Daniel Taylor.

HARRY GIBBS, a Customs Inspector.

PETER, a Door-keeper at the Customs.

DANIEL TAYLOR, a Deputy Surveyor in the Customs.

ETHEL CARTWRIGHT.

SARAH PEABODY.

AMY CARTWRIGHT.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON.

LAMBART, Butler at the Harringtons.

NORA RUTLEDGE.

ALICE HARRINGTON.

MONTY VAUGHAN.

STEVEN DENBY.

ACT I.

The office of a Deputy Surveyor of the Port of New York in the Customs House, New York City.

ACT II.

At the Harringtons, Long Island.

(*During Act II the curtain will be lowered for thirty seconds to indicate the lapse of two hours.*)

ACT III.

Denby's Room at the Harringtons.

ACT IV.

The same as Act II.

NOTE—The action of the fourth act is supposed to begin at a time five minutes before the curtain falls on the third act.

The play takes place during the afternoon and evening of a day in August.

Act 1

SCENE.

The scene is in the Customs House, New York. The office of a deputy surveyor of the port. It is a plain business like interior. There is a door center, one down right, and another up left. There is a desk, Taylor's, at right behind which is a large bay-window, showing a view of tall buildings and the distant river. There is another desk, Duncan's, at left. Up stage by the center door on one side is a hat rack. On the other a water cooler. Beside this are some filing cabinets. There are two chairs beside each of the desks. A calendar and one or two official announcements hang on the walls.

TIME—It is four o'clock on a Friday afternoon in August.

DISCOVERED—At rise Duncan is seated at his desk L. He is a miniature Daniel Taylor—and as an actor must have authority and ability to get lines over, as the telling of most of the early plot depends on him. He is dressed in the uniform of a customs inspector. As the curtain rises Duncan is in the middle of a telephone conversation.

DUNCAN—(*Continuing speech impressively*)—Yes! Yes! Yes! And say, be right on the job. The minute the Mauretania gets to quarantine go through the declarations and 'phone me here whether Steven Denby declares a necklace or not. No—D-e-n-b-y—it's valued at two hundred thousand dollars. You bet it's a big case. No, I can't tell you who's handling it. Never mind whether R. J. is at work on it or not; your job is to telephone me as soon as you get a peek at those declarations. Bye, bye.

(*Gibbs enters C, door as he hangs up receiver.*)

(*Gibbs is a fat man, full of interest in any gossip that comes his way. He is dressed in the uniform of a customs inspector.*)

GIBBS—Hello, Jim.

DUNCAN—Hello, Harry, thought you were searching tourists over on the Olympic this afternoon.

GIBBS—Oh, I was, with two thousand crazy women, all of 'em swearing they hadn't brought in a thing. Gosh, women is liars.

DUNCAN—What're you doing here?

GIBBS—I brought along a dame they want your boss Taylor to look over. It needs a smart guy like him to land her.

DUNCAN—The old man is down with Malone now—he'll be back soon.

GIBBS—I'll be tickled to death to wait here all day. I'm sick of searching trunks that's got nothin' in 'em but clothes. It ain't like the good old days. In them times if you treated a tourist right he'd hand you his business card and when you showed up at his office the next day he'd come across without a squeal.

DUNCAN—That's true. Why, when I was inspector, if you had any luck picking out your passenger you'd find twenty dollars lyin' right on the top tray of the first trunk he opened for you.

GIBBS—And believe me when that happened I never opened any more of *his* trunks, I just labelled the whole bunch. But now —why since the investigations at the customs began I'm so honest it's pitiful.

DUNCAN—It's a hell of a thing when a government official has to live on his salary.

GIBBS—If times don't change I'm goin' into the police department. All I can get now is a bunch of aigrettes.—(*Takes aigrettes from inside coat pocket. Spreads them.*)—I nipped these off a lady coming down the gang plank of the Olympic.

DUNCAN—(*Cross to L of Gibbs*)—Good for you. My wife was asking this morning if I couldn't get her a bunch—(*Grabs them out of Gibbs' hand*)—These'll come in just right.—(*Puts them in his pocket. Cross to back of table L, standing arranging papers.*)

GIBBS—But say, Jim—those are mine.

DUNCAN—Can't you guys ever get out of the habit of grafting?—(*Peter enters center. He is a uniformed attendant at the customs.*)

PETER—(*To Duncan*)—Miss Ethel Cartwright's here.

DUNCAN—She is? Ask her to wait.

PETER—Yes, sir.—(*He exits.*)

(*Gibbs crosses to R C and looks out of window.*)

DUNCAN—Hello, give me the collector's office. Hello—I'd like to speak to the deputy surveyor—Mr. Taylor. It's Duncan down in his office.—(*He holds the wire.*)

GIBBS—Got a cigar, Jim?—(*Coming down to R of desk L.*)

DUNCAN—(*Taking cigar from pocket*)—Yes.

GIBBS—(*Reaching for it*)—Thanks.

DUNCAN—And I'm going to smoke it myself.—(*Puts cigar in his mouth.*)

GIBBS—(*Taking cigar from his own pocket*)—All right, then. I'll smoke one of my own.—(*Goes over to desk R, and getting match, lights cigar.*)

DUNCAN—(*In 'phone*)—Hello, hello, chief. Miss Ethel Cartwright's here. Ten minutes? All right, sir.—(*He rings off*)—Well, what do you think of her falling for a bum stall like that?

GIBBS—Who? What? Which stall?

DUNCAN—Why, Miss Cartwright did.

GIBBS—What is she? A smuggler?

DUNCAN—No, she's a swell society girl.

GIBBS—If she ain't a smuggler, what's she down here for?

DUNCAN—The chief wants to use her in the Denby case so he had me write her a letter saying we'd received a package from Paris containing dutiable goods, a diamond ring—and would she kindly call here this afternoon to straighten out the matter—and she fell for a fake like that.

GIBBS—I get you—but what does he want her for?

DUNCAN—For the Denby case.

GIBBS—What's that?

DUNCAN—The biggest smuggling job Taylor has ever handled.

GIBBS—You don't say so? Why, nobody's told me anything about it.

DUNCAN—Can you keep your mouth shut?

GIBBS—Sure. I'm a bachelor.

DUNCAN—Just take a peek out that door, will you?

GIBBS—All right.—(*Goes to door R and looks out.*)

DUNCAN—I never know when he may stop out there and listen to what I'm saying.

GIBBS—He is the original sneaky foot, isn't he?

DUNCAN—I should say he is. Always wears rubber heels on his shoes.

GIBBS—(*Sits on stool R of desk L*)—Now, what is all this about?

DUNCAN—(*Very confidential*)—Last week the chief got a cable from Harlow, a salesman in Cartier's.

GIBBS—Cartier's—what's that?

DUNCAN—The biggest jewelry shop in Paris. Harlow's our secret agent there. His cable said that an American named Steven Denby had bought a pearl necklace there for two hundred thousand dollars.

GIBBS—(*Greatly impressed*)—Two hundred thousand dollars? Gee! But who's Steven Denby?—a millionaire?—I never heard of him.

DUNCAN—Neither did I—and, what's more, we can't find out a thing about him. That's what makes it so suspicious. You ought to be able to get the dope on a man who can throw away two hundred thousand dollars on a bunch of pearls.

GIBBS—Did he slip the necklace by the customs?

DUNCAN—No, he hasn't landed yet. He's on the Mauretania.

GIBBS—On the Mauretania? Why, she gets in this afternoon.

DUNCAN—(*More confidential than ever*)—Yes. He and a fellow named Monty Vaughan are travelling with Mrs. Michael Harrington.

GIBBS—You mean *the* Mrs. Michael Harrington?

DUNCAN—Sure. There's only one.

GIBBS—(*Rising, crossing to C*)—Well, if he's a friend of Mrs. Harrington, he's no smuggler. He'll declare the necklace.

DUNCAN—The chief has a hunch that he won't.—(*Rises and crosses to Gibbs L.*)—He thinks that Denby may be a slick confidence guy who has wormed his way into the Harrington's friendship so he won't be suspected.

GIBBS—But maybe he ain't travelling in their party at all, but just picked 'em up on the boat.

DUNCAN—No, he's a friend, all right. Mrs. Harrington's taking Denby and Vaughan down to her country place on Long Island direct from the dock. The head steward, he's our agent on the Mauretania, sent us a copy of her wireless to old man Harrington.

GIBBS—He sounds like sort of a smart set Raffles, don't he?

DUNCAN—That's just the idea.

GIBBS—What's Taylor going to do?

DUNCAN—I don't know; he's kind of up against it. If Denby's on the level and he's pinched on the dock and searched and nothing's found on him, think of the roar that Michael Harrington—worth ninety billion dollars—will put up at Washington because we bothered his friends. Why, he'd go and kick to his pals down there and we'd all be fired.—(*Crosses in front of Gibbs to table R.*)

GIBBS—But where does this girl out there, Miss Cartwright, come in on this job?

DUNCAN—(*Cross to R of Gibbs*)—I don't know, except that she's going down to the Harringtons this afternoon, too, and Taylor's got some scheme. He's a pretty smart boy.

GIBBS—You bet he is, and maybe he's smarter than you know. Ever hear of R. J.?

DUNCAN—R. J.? You mean that secret service agent?

GIBBS—Yes—they say he's a pal of the president's.

DUNCAN—Well, what's he got to do with this?

GIBBS—Don't you know who he is?

DUNCAN—No, and neither does anybody else. Nobody but the president and the secretary of the treasury know who he *really* is.

GIBBS—(*Puts foot on stool R of desk L proudly*)—Well, I know, too.

DUNCAN—(*Contemptuously*)—Yes, you do, just the same as I do—that he's the biggest man in the secret service, that's all.

GIBBS—Ain't it funny that you right here in the office don't know?

DUNCAN—Don't know what?

GIBBS—Why, your boss Taylor is R. J.

DUNCAN—(*Laughing*)—Taylor? You're crazy.—(*Crosses to desk L.*)

GIBBS—(*Steps backward to C—chestily*)—Am I? Do you remember the Stuyvesant case?

DUNCAN—(*Impressed*)—By George, that's so.

GIBBS—Why, all the boys are on.

DUNCAN—Say, I wouldn't be surprised if you were right.

GIBBS—I know I am.—(*Door slams and Taylor's voice is heard off R.*)

DUNCAN—That's the boss now.—(*Gibbs nervously fumbles with his cigar and chews it. Duncan also gets busy with papers.*)

(*Taylor enters door R hurriedly and crosses to chair at desk R. Taylor is an incisive, smart, bull-doggy sort of man typical of the surliness of a certain well-known kind of government official. He is a bully, catering to his superiors and ragging his inferiors. He must have much authority, force and menace.*)

TAYLOR—Where's Miss Cartwright, Duncan?

DUNCAN—Out there, sir.—(*Pointing off C.*)

TAYLOR—(*Sitting at desk R*)—Want to see me, Gibbs?

GIBBS—Yes, sir.

TAYLOR—Well, wait outside—tell Peter when I ring to bring Miss Cartwright in.

GIBBS—Yes, sir.—(*He exits.*)

TAYLOR—Did Bronson from the New York Burglar Insurance Company send over some papers to me relating to the theft of Miss Cartwright's jewels?

DUNCAN—Yes, sir; they're here.—(*Gives them to Taylor.*)

TAYLOR—Good.—(*He reads them.*)—Ah! By George, I was right. I knew it was a cinch there was something queer about her diamonds being stolen.

DUNCAN—(*Puzzled*)—What diamonds do you mean? The case wasn't in our office, was it?

TAYLOR—No, this is a little outside job my friend Bronson's mixed up in, but it may help us.—(*He is still reading the papers.*)—I'm sure it was a frame up, that she wasn't robbed, that she collected from the company on a false claim.

DUNCAN—But I can't see.

TAYLOR—No, if you could you'd have my job. Has the Mauretania got to quarantine yet?

DUNCAN—No, sir.

TAYLOR—Telephone Brown to notify you the minute she does—tell him we've got to know as soon as possible whether Denby declares that necklace—*everything depends on that!*

DUNCAN—(*Coming to L of desk R*)—And if he does declare it?

TAYLOR—Then, of course, we haven't any case; but, somehow, I don't think there's going to be a declaration.

DUNCAN—(*Nodding his head*)—Well, I'm holding Ford and Hammett to search Denby at the dock.

TAYLOR—Well, keep them here until I let you know. I'm not sure whether I want Denby searched.

DUNCAN—But, Chief, if he doesn't declare the necklace, it'll prove he's smuggling it.

TAYLOR—I know, I know, but we've got to be pretty careful about offending any friend of Michael Harrington's. He's mighty rich and very influential. We've got to be absolutely sure we have the goods on Denby.

DUNCAN—(*Feeling his way*)—Well, I guess it won't take R. J. long to land him.

TAYLOR—R. J.? What's he got to do with this?

DUNCAN—(*Insinuatingly*)—I thought you might be able to get *him* interested in the case.

TAYLOR—I don't know anything about him.

DUNCAN—(*Skeptically*)—Oh, don't you—(*Changing the subject*)—Well, if we don't search him at the dock, what are we going to do?

TAYLOR—If we let him slide through and he thinks he's fooled us, it might be easier to get him after he's down at the Harringtons and is off his guard.

DUNCAN—(*Eagerly*)—Have you got one of the Harrington servants to spy for us?

TAYLOR—No, but don't you know that Miss Ethel Cartwright is leaving this afternoon to spend the week end with the Harringtons?—(*He pushes buzzer.*)

DUNCAN—You mean you're going to get her to work for us down there?

TAYLOR—Well, that wouldn't be a bad idea, would it, Jim?

DUNCAN—But how can you?

TAYLOR—That's what I'm going to find out now.—(*Peter enters, followed by Ethel Cartwright.*)

(*Ethel Cartwright is a tall, very pretty woman of twenty-seven, and while her manner is one of extreme poise that comes from perfect breeding, and the almost unconscious knowledge that she is what she is, none the less she is underneath very much of a girl. She has a great deal of charm and a decided sense of humor; she is loyal; she is plucky. Physically she is the sort of woman who, when she enters a room, other people say "Who is that?" and mentally she is the kind that men love and women criticize; and the one's love and the other's criticism are alike a matter of indifference to her.*)

PETER—Miss Cartwright.—(*He exits C.*)

TAYLOR—(*Rises and comes around back of desk*)—Sorry to have kept you waiting, Miss Cartwright.

ETHEL—It doesn't matter in the least. I've never been down at the customs before. I've found it quite interesting.

TAYLOR—My name is Taylor—I'm a deputy surveyor.

ETHEL—I believe, Mr. Taylor, you wanted to see me about a ring.

TAYLOR—Yes, the intention evidently was to smuggle it through the customs.

ETHEL—Do you really think so? Of course I haven't the least idea who could have sent it to me.

TAYLOR—Of course you haven't. It's probably some mistake. Perhaps, however, the record will shed some light on the matter. Duncan, go and get those papers relating to Miss Cartwright.

DUNCAN—(*Blankly*)—What papers?

TAYLOR—(*Significantly*)—About the package that was sent to her from Paris.

DUNCAN—Oh, those papers. Yes, sir.—(*He exits L.*)

TAYLOR—Won't you sit down, Miss Cartwright?

ETHEL—You know, I feel quite excited at being here.—(*She sits*)—Almost like a smuggler myself.

TAYLOR—(*Sits*)—Speaking of smuggling, Miss Cartwright, while we're waiting I'd like to have a little business chat with you if I may.

ETHEL—With me?

TAYLOR—Yes. As perhaps you may know, there has lately been a great deal of smuggling by those prominent in New York society. It is often difficult to detect because of the influence and position of the participants. They move in a world where neither I nor any of my operatives could enter—frankly, we couldn't pass muster for a moment. You follow me?—(*Looks at her sharply.*)

ETHEL—(*Doubtfully*)—Yes, but——

TAYLOR—We are looking for someone who belongs in society; someone who is clever enough to provide us with information and

yet never be suspected. We would prefer that someone to be a woman—above suspicion—like you, for instance.

ETHEL—Really, Mr. Taylor——

TAYLOR—Miss Cartwright, I have reason to know that you and your family have been in financial difficulties—(*Look from Ethel. He breaks in*)—since your father died. The position I describe could be made very profitable.—(*Pause and look at her.*) —How would you like to enter the secret service of the United States customs?

ETHEL—Really, that's quite too preposterous. You must be joking.

TAYLOR—No, I'm quite in earnest.

ETHEL—(*Rising*)—The whole idea is too absurd. I must ask you for the papers regarding the ring.

TAYLOR—They'll be here any moment. I'm sorry you don't care to entertain my proposition, but that, of course, is up to you.— Miss Cartwright, as it happens, there's another little matter I'd like to discuss with you. Do you recall a George Bronson, the claim agent of the New York Burglar Insurance Company, the company which insured your jewels that were stolen?—(*Looks at papers.*)

ETHEL—I think I do—but——

TAYLOR—Well, that company has had a great deal of trouble with society women who have got money by pawning their jewels, then putting in a claim that they had been stolen, and recovering from the company on the alleged loss.

ETHEL—Are you trying to insinuate that——

TAYLOR—Certainly not. I'm merely explaining that that was Bronson's first idea—but, of course, on investigation he realized as I do now how absurd that was——

ETHEL—Naturally.

TAYLOR—And yet there were certain things that he could not quite understand.

ETHEL—May I ask what Mr. Bronson's inability to understand has to do with you?

TAYLOR—Simply that he happens to be a very good friend of mine. He often consults me about cases that puzzle him. The theft of your jewels puzzled him greatly.

ETHEL—Puzzled him? It was perfectly simple.

TAYLOR—Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me the circumstances of the case.

ETHEL—I really don't see how this concerns the customs.

TAYLOR—It doesn't except that I am acting as Bronson's friend, and if you will answer my questions I may be able to recover your jewels for you.

ETHEL—(*Sits*)—Oh, I see. That would be splendid. Of course, I'll tell you anything I know.

TAYLOR—Well, the first feature that impressed Bronson—and me—was that the theft seemed to be an inside job.

ETHEL—I don't believe I quite understand.

TAYLOR—Well, there was no evidence to indicate that a thief had broken into your home.

ETHEL—But that could be the only explanation.

TAYLOR—Why?

ETHEL—Our family consists of just my mother, my sister and myself and two old servants who've lived with us for years. And, of course, it wasn't any of us.

TAYLOR—Naturally not, but—how did you come to discover the loss of your diamonds?

ETHEL—Oh, I didn't discover it. I was at Bar Harbour.

TAYLOR—Oh, you were away—I didn't know that. Who did find out your jewels were gone?

ETHEL—My sister. She missed them——

TAYLOR—(*Significantly*)—Oh, your sister? I see. Your sister missed them—— (*Pushes buzzer and writes on paper.*)

ETHEL—So, naturally, it must have been some thief from the outside.

TAYLOR—Of course; of course.—(*Duncan enters and goes over to desk R.*)—Haven't you got those papers yet?

DUNCAN—Sorry, chief, one of 'em's missing. We'll find it soon.

TAYLOR—Well, be quick about it and meanwhile attend to this.—(*Hands Duncan paper. Duncan gives quick look at him.*)—You understand—— (*Behind Ethel, Duncan points questioningly at Ethel. Taylor nods.*)

DUNCAN—Yes, sir.—(*Exits L.*)

TAYLOR—Sorry for the delay, Miss Cartwright.

ETHEL—(*Smiling*)—Not at all. I don't mind waiting for hours if you will only find my diamonds for me.

TAYLOR—Well, to be quite frank with you, I'm afraid Bronson did have the wrong idea about you and your family. Although he couldn't get any absolute evidence, he did believe some one vitally concerned had put in a false claim.

ETHEL—(*Taken aback*)—Do you mean to accuse me or my family of swindling?

TAYLOR—Certainly not. Now that I have talked with you I realize how absolutely wrong Bronson was, and I'll be happy to assure him of my entire belief in your innocence.

ETHEL—It's very kind of you.—(*Rising*)—I'm afraid I really can't wait longer for the papers about the ring.

TAYLOR—Miss Cartwright, there isn't any ring.

ETHEL—(*At front of chair*)—What?

TAYLOR—That was merely a pretext. I was afraid the truth would not serve to bring you.

ETHEL—You asked me to come here because you thought I was a swindler?

TAYLOR—Well, we all make mistakes.

ETHEL—(*Indignantly*)—And you insult me with that absurd proposition that I enter the secret service and spy on my friends.

TAYLOR—Oh, I meant that. Perhaps some day you will think better of it. I feel sure you will.

ETHEL—I feel quite sure I won't.—(*Going to door C*)—Good afternoon.

TAYLOR—(*She exits. Taylor pushes buzzer. Duncan enters, crosses to desk R*)—Did you get that girl's sister on the 'phone?

DUNCAN—Yes, sir. I told her Miss Cartwright wanted her to come here and she said she'd be right down.

TAYLOR—Let me know the instant she gets here.

DUNCAN—Yes, sir. Is Miss Cartwright going to help us on the Denby case?

TAYLOR—(*Significantly*)—I wouldn't be a bit surprised.—(*Gibbs enters C.*)

GIBBS—Say, Chief, can I see you now?

TAYLOR—What is it?

GIBBS—There's a deaf and dumb chicken out here.

TAYLOR—A what?

GIBBS—A gal that can't hear or speak or write. They say she's smuggled in a bracelet, but they've searched her eight times and can't get a trace of it, so they sent her to you.

TAYLOR—Well, you don't expect me to search her?

GIBBS—No, but I thought you might want to hand her the third degree.

TAYLOR—Well, bring her in.

GIBBS—Yes, sir. (*He exits C.*)

TAYLOR—She's probably bluffing. Put that chair over there.—(*Indicates down R of C. Duncan moves chair.*)—We'll try the gun gag on her. There's a revolver in that drawer. When I say "go," you shoot. Got it?

DUNCAN—(*Goes near drawer in upper end of desk*)—Yes, sir.

(*Gibbs enters C, bringing Sarah Peabody after him. He puts her in front of chair. Sarah Peabody, if she were not deaf and dumb, would be a slangy young woman with a temper. Anyhow, she ought to be pretty.*)

TAYLOR—(*Sizes her up for a second*)—Well, tell her to sit down.

GIBBS—Sure.—(*Crosses to her and motions.*)—Sit down.—(*She pays no attention to him.*)—Hay, squattez vous.—(*Same business.*)—Setzen sie.—(*Turns away from her.*)—I'm done. That's all the languages I know. I used to think it was a terrible thing that women could talk, but I guess the Almighty knowed more than I did.

DUNCAN—Hey, you, sit there.—(*He grasps her roughly from behind and pushes her in chair.*)

TAYLOR—(*Rises and comes around in front of desk*)—She's not shamming?

GIBBS—She ain't spoke all day, and no woman could keep from talking that long.

TAYLOR—Women do a lot for diamonds.

GIBBS—None of 'em ever do me for none.

TAYLOR—(*Crosses to her, roughly*)—If you're acting, you'd better give it up now, because I'm sure to find out, and if I do, I'll send you to jail.—(*Stands back, regarding her keenly. She stares straight ahead.*)—So you won't answer me, eh? Going to force my hand, are you?—(*Raises hand and signals Duncan.*)—Go.—(*Duncan fires pistol. Sarah does not wince or move. Taylor and Gibbs bend over and look her in the eye.*)—She's deaf, alright, that's a cinch. Now, Gibbs, what is all this?

(*Taylor at lower end of desk R. Gibbs crosses to her; Duncan crosses down L of Gibbs.*)

GIBBS—She's got a bracelet chuck full of diamonds, and we can't find it.

TAYLOR—How do you know she's got it?

GIBBS—She showed it to the woman who was in the same cabin with her.—(*Turns to Duncan.*)—She was the one who tipped us off.

SARAH—(*Rises suddenly and speaking at the same time*)—Why, the dirty hussy.

GIBBS—(*Looks at her, then at Duncan—then at Taylor in great amazement*)—For the love of Mike!—(*All three men in great surprise.*)

SARAH—Do you know why she told about me? She wanted to alibi herself, make you think she was an honest, God-fearing lady that would never smuggle—and she had four times what I had—why, it was her who put me up to smuggling—she even taught me to be deaf and dumb—I'd like to meet her again some time.

TAYLOR—Well, when we arrest her we'll need you to testify against her.

SARAH—You can bet your life I won't be dumb then.

TAYLOR—Now, where's your bracelet?

SARAH—Wait a minute—what's going to happen to me?

TAYLOR—Produce the bracelet, pay duty on it, and we'll let you go free for the tip.

SARAH—You're on. This is it—the ring handle of my parasol. I just painted it, that's all.—(*Showing it to Taylor.*)

GIBBS—(*Grabbing it from her*)—Well, can you approach that?—(*Takes bracelet over and shows it to Duncan.*)

PETER—(*Enters C.*)—Miss Amy Cartwright is here, sir.

TAYLOR—Ask her to come in.—(*Peter exit C. Sarah powders her nose.*)—Send this girl down to Ford, Gibbs. He can handle her from now on.

GIBBS—All right.

SARAH—(*Crosses up to desk R*)—I'll be glad to have someone else on the job. I'm sick o' trottin' around with this fat guy.

GIBBS—(*Injured*)—Say now—— (*Crosses to her at desk R.*)

TAYLOR—Take her along.

SARAH—(*To Taylor*)—Ta-ta, old sport. I certainly fooled you when you shot that gun off.—(*Gibbs takes her by the arm. To Gibbs as they go*)—And I could have kept it up if it hadn't made me sore—her putting one over on me like that—— And she was so blamed nice to me. But when one woman's nice to another she means mischief, you can bet your B. V. D.'s.—*They exit L.*)

TAYLOR—Now, listen. When I ring, come in and say that Bronson is here to see me.

DUNCAN—(*Surprised*)—Bronson?

TAYLOR—Yes, do you understand?

DUNCAN—Yes, sir.

TAYLOR—That's all.—(*Indicates Duncan to go. He exits L. Taylor pauses L. Goes back of desk. Peter opens door C. Amy*

Cartwright enters. She is a pretty young girl of eighteen; weak, sweet and dependent, with no backbone. She is the opposite of her sister Ethel, on whom she relies absolutely.)—Miss Amy Cartwright?

AMY—Yes; my sister telephoned me to come here.

TAYLOR—Oh, you got her message?

Amy—Yes, where is my sister?

TAYLOR—She went out on an errand. Won't you sit down?

AMY—No, I'll wait outside for her.

TAYLOR—(*Evasively*)—She'll be back shortly; she said to tell you to wait—— (*Points to chair—she sits.*) While she was here she was kind enough to give me some information in reference to the theft of her jewels. She suggested that you might be able to add to that information.

Amy—(*Frightened*)—I?

TAYLOR—(*Handling papers of Bronson case. Sharply*)—How did you discover your sister's jewels were stolen?

AMY—(*Nervously*)—Why I—I went to her dressing table one morning and they weren't there.

TAYLOR—(*Meaningly*)—Oh, they weren't there? Then what did you do?

AMY—Why—I—I telephoned the company.

TAYLOR—Without consulting your sister?

AMY—(*Evading*)—She was out of town.

TAYLOR—How did you know your sister hadn't taken her diamonds with her?

AMY—(*Hesitating*)—Why, I think she must have told me before she left.

TAYLOR—Oh, you think so—but you didn't telegraph her to make sure before you put in the claim?

AMY—(*Frightened and confused*)—Why, no—no——

TAYLOR—(*With complete change to genial manner*)—Well, you did quite the right thing, little girl.

AMY—(*Relieved*)—Yes, of course.

TAYLOR—(*Puts down papers and eyes her keenly*)—There's no question that your sister's jewels were stolen. I have the thief now.

AMY—(*Nervously*)—You have the thief?

TAYLOR—Yes, Miss Cartwright—I've arrested the man who robbed your sister.

AMY—The man!

TAYLOR—Yes, poor devil—he has a wife and children, too. He swears they'll starve, but he's guilty and he's got to go to jail.

AMY—(*Guiltily, weakly*)—Are you sure he's guilty?

TAYLOR—Yes; why—have you any reason to think he's not?

AMY—No—no—no——

TAYLOR—Of course, when the diamonds are recovered, the money you received—— Your sister gave it to you, didn't she?

AMY—(*Hesitatingly*)—Yes.

TAYLOR—(*Triumphantly*)—I thought so. . . . That money will have to be returned to the company—you still have it, of course?

Amy—(*Quickly*)—No.

TAYLOR—(*Sharply*)—What did you do with it?

AMY—(*Hesitatingly*)—I—I paid a lot of bills.

TAYLOR—(*Quickly*)—What sort of bills?

AMY—Why, dressmakers, and hats and things.

TAYLOR—(*Quickly*)—Of course, you have receipts for the money?

AMY—Why—why, I don't remember.

TAYLOR—Oh, you don't remember; but you do remember who you paid the money to?

AMY—Why, yes.

TAYLOR—(*Quickly*)—Who was it?

AMY—I can't tell you. I won't answer any more questions until my sister comes.

TAYLOR—(*Strongly*)—You've got to answer me.

AMY—(*Rising*)—I won't—I won't.

TAYLOR—(*Rising, triumphantly*)—And I know why you won't—it's because you——

ETHEL—(*Enters, stands in door C*)—What on earth——

AMY—(*Hearing Ethel's voice, she runs over to her*)—Oh, Ethel, why did you ask me to come here?

ETHEL—(*Up C her arm round Amy. To Taylor*)—What did you mean by sending that message to my home saying I wanted to see my sister?

TAYLOR—(*Bluffing, behind desk*)—What message?

ETHEL—(*Cross down to desk R*)—Oh, you needn't think you can fool me. When I telephoned home just now they told me there had been a message from me asking my sister to meet me here.

TAYLOR—(*Crossing to foot of desk, pushes buzzer*)—Well I wanted to question her about the theft of those diamonds. I have—— (*Ethel looks at Amy.*) She's had some very interesting things to say. (*Duncan enters L just inside door.*)

DUNCAN—Bronson's here, sir—— (*Exits, leaving door open.*)

AMY—(*Frightened, takes a step toward Ethel, under her breath*)—Bronson!

TAYLOR—(*Crosses to back of desk R, then turns*)—If you'll excuse me, I'll leave you ladies to talk things over.—(*To Ethel*)—I'd advise you to question your sister, Miss Cartwright; you may find it quite interesting. (*Ethel crosses to C.—Amy drops in chair.*)

ETHEL—My sister and I won't submit to this treatment.

TAYLOR—I'm sorry but you'll have to wait till my return.

ETHEL—But——

TAYLOR—You'd better—— (*Look at Amy*)—If you want to avoid trouble for your sister. (*He exits door L.*)

ETHEL—(*Amazed, turns to Amy*)—What's happened—what is it—what did he ask you?

AMY—(*Hysterically*)—Oh, Ethel,—they know—they know——

ETHEL—Know what?

AMY—That man suspects—I know he does—the way he spoke to me.

ETHEL—What are you talking about—suspects what?

AMY—Oh, Ethel, don't let them take me away—oh, don't—don't.

ETHEL—(*Sharply. Draws a step away from her in amazement*)—What are you saying?

AMY—Your jewels weren't stolen—(*Pause*)—I took them—I pawned them.

ETHEL—Amy!

AMY—I took them. I had to have money. A woman told me I could get it by pretending to the company the things were stolen and they'd pay, and I did it—I did it.

ETHEL—(*Stunned, horrified—unbelieving*)—Amy, you swindled the company!

AMY—Yes, but I couldn't help it. I didn't mean to—I didn't——

ETHEL—Why—why—why—for God's sake, tell me—why?

AMY—(*Turns her head away*)—Oh, I lost a lot of money gambling—playing bridge.

ETHEL—Playing with whom?

AMY—(*Avoiding Ethel's gaze; turns, faces R*)—Oh, they're people you don't know—and one night—we'd all had dinner together at Claremont—and they wanted to play bridge—I said no at first, but they insisted—I got excited—I didn't realize how much I was losing—I kept on trying to get even but I couldn't—I lost a thousand dollars.

ETHEL—Amy!

AMY—Oh, I know, I know—but I didn't mean to—— (*Turns to Ethel*)—Ethel, believe me, I didn't—I didn't——

ETHEL—What happened then?

AMY—I couldn't pay, of course, and the other women said they'd expose me and tell you and mother—and put me in jail. I didn't know what to do. I went out of my head, I think; a man there, Philip Sloane, offered to lend me money.

ETHEL—(*Horrified*)—You didn't borrow from that man?

AMY—I did. What else could I do? You weren't here and I had to do something right away.

ETHEL—But what about the jewels?

AMY—When he'd lent me the money—— Oh, I can't tell even you, Ethel, what he said—I never knew there could be men like that. When I wouldn't—wouldn't go away with him and do as he wanted, oh, he threatened all sorts of things. I had only one idea then, to pay him back, no matter what happened. I pawned your diamonds and I paid him.—(*She sinks into chair, crying.*)

ETHEL—(*Puts arm around her*)—My poor sister—my little Amy—I'm so—so sorry for you. Why—why didn't you tell me so I could help you?

AMY—(*Looking up into her face*)—I was afraid to. I meant to tell you next month, when we got that money from father's estate; I thought we could pay the company then so I wouldn't be a thief any more. Oh, I'm glad I've told you now; I've been so frightened.

ETHEL—(*Soothing her*)—There—there—there——

AMY—And this man knows. I could tell he did—that's why he sent for me; can't you see now he suspects, can't you?

ETHEL—Yes, yes, I see—that's what he's been leading up to, but he can't be sure or he'd have accused you direct. Oh, thank God you've told me.

AMY—(*Quickly*)—Oh, Ethel, don't let them take me away—don't let them put me in prison! I'd die, I'd die. Don't, please—don't let them.

ETHEL—Ssh! Sssh! Don't say anything before him, no matter what happens. He may try to trap you; let me do all the talking; no matter what he says, don't answer him. Do you understand?

AMY—I'll try, I'll try.

ETHEL—(*Comforting her*)—Stop crying. You've got to keep control of yourself. He doesn't know anything. If you'll just do as I say I'll get you out of it somehow. I'll save you—I promise—you believe me, don't you?

AMY—Yes, Ethel, I believe you.

ETHEL—Now talk of something else—anything——

AMY—Oh, I'm afraid—I'm afraid I'll break down. I can't do it. Can't I go home now?

ETHEL—(*Turns up C; Amy follows*)—Yes, that'd be best; quick, before he comes back.

TAYLOR—(*Entering*)—I'm sorry, Miss Cartwright, but you can't leave.

ETHEL—My sister isn't well; she must go home.

TAYLOR—I've listened to your sister's confession—it's very complete.—(*Lifting dictagraph off desk L.*)—You see, we have a dictagraph here.—(*Going towards Amy*)—Young woman, you're under arrest.—(*Amy in Ethel's arms.*)

ETHEL—No, no, don't take her—take me. She's only a child; don't spoil her life. I'll go. I'll do whatever you like; it doesn't matter about me. For God's sake, don't do anything to my sister.

TAYLOR—She's guilty, and the law——

ETHEL—Please don't send her to prison. If someone pays, what difference does it make to you? If you'll just let her go, I'll do anything. Isn't there anything I can do?

TAYLOR—(*After a pause*)—Yes, there is. You can accept my proposition to enter the secret service of the United States Customs.

ETHEL—Oh, yes, yes; anything.

TAYLOR—Now you're talking. Then we won't send your sister to prison.

AMY—Oh!—(*She breaks down, sobbing.*)

ETHEL—You won't tell Bronson?

TAYLOR—No.

ETHEL—Ah!

TAYLOR—Now that I realize the situation I'm very sorry for you both, so suppose we leave that little episode of the jewels as between your sister and her conscience so long as you do what I ask. I'll let you know when I need you. It may be to-night, it may be in a month, but when I want you——

ETHEL—I shall be ready.

DUNCAN—(*Entering L*)—Say, Chief——

TAYLOR—Get out. I'm busy.

DUNCAN—I thought you'd want to know the Mauretania's coming up the bay now.

TAYLOR—She is!—Wait a minute. Now, good afternoon, Miss Cartwright. Remember what's at stake—your future—your sister's happiness, my silence, depend on your not failing me.

ETHEL—(*With a break in her voice*)—I shall not fail you. (*She takes Amy out C. Duncan crosses up and closes door C.*)

TAYLOR—(*Coming down to desk R*)—Did Brown phone you from quarantine?

DUNCAN—Yes, sir; Steven Denby did *not* declare the necklace——

TAYLOR—Ah, then I was right—Denby is trying to smuggle it—Jim this is the biggest job we've ever had.

DUNCAN—I'v got Ford and Hammet all ready to meet him at the dock.

TAYLOR—Don't send 'em—there's to be no search.

DUNCAN—No search?

TAYLOR—Let 'em slide through with the ordinary examination. Trail 'em to Long Island, to be sure they don't slip it to someone on the way—but no fuss, no arrests. Meanwhile get up a warrant, a fake warrant, for the arrest of Miss Amy Cartwright. It may come in handy.

DUNCAN—Yes, sir.

TAYLOR—Now change your clothes. Bring Gibbs with you; meet me at the Pennsylvania Station at six o'clock.

DUNCAN—Where are we going?

TAYLOR—(*Going to door center*)—To Long Island to call on Miss Ethel Cartwright.

DUNCAN—(*Excited*)—Then you can use her to land Denby?

TAYLOR—(*Turning to Duncan*)—Use her?!—(*With grim humor*)—Say, Jim, she doesn't know it, but she's going to get that necklace for me tonight!

(*He exits hurriedly center door as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

Act 2

SCENE I.

The scene is the large hall or living room of the Harrington country home on Long Island. The furnishings and atmosphere should be charming, and while simple, indicate both the good taste and the wealth of the owners. There are two French windows right center leading out to the lawn and double doors right to the dining room and one at left to the library; an alcove at left in which are the first half dozen steps and the landing of a flight of stairs leading to the floor above. There is a table at center, chairs around it, and a fireplace at left with a club fender and a half folded screen. Other furnishings as necessary. The back drop indicates a lawn and distant trees.

(In Act IV large table is moved slightly to left and arm chair is put back of it; and three stools around it for card game.)

DISCOVERED—Michael Harrington in arm chair L of table L, reading a magazine and sipping a Scotch highball. On the table is a bottle of Scotch, a syphon and also a pint bottle of champagne.

Harrington is a man of fifty-five or sixty, genial, charming and with a sense of humor. He is in love with his wife, although he is always by way of poking fun at her, and she at him. His desire for highballs is more of a hobby because his wife forbids his drinking rather than a real keenness for alcohol. He is conscious of his own frailty.

There is a toot of a motor horn heard in distance.

LAMBART—(*Enters R. Lambart is a smart English butler*)—Mr. Harrington, the car is just coming up the drive—Mrs. Harrington is in it.

MICHAEL—(*Rising hastily*)—Great Scott, my wife—the boat must have docked early.—(*Crosses R, toward door R.*)

LAMBART—Yes, sir.

MICHAEL—Get rid of these!—(*Indicating bottles*)—And not a word, Lambart, not a word.

LAMBART—Certainly not, sir—I quite understand. I was valet to an English lord for seven years. You can rely on me, sir.—(*He exits L U with the tray. The motor horn is heard full blast off R. Nora Rutledge is heard calling off R. Nora is a clever young ingenue of twenty-two or twenty-three, with a tendency toward pert remarks, whose pertness must be removed by the charm of her own personality.*)

NORA—(*Excitedly, off stage*)—Mr. Harrington! Mr. Harrington! Alice is here—— (*Enters door R, comes R of table C.*) Alice is here, and Monty Vaughan is with her.

MICHAEL—Fine, fine. How is she—have they had a good voyage?—(*Alice Harrington enters door R and rushes into*

Michael's arms.)—My George! I'm glad to see you.—(*He leads her down to front of table.*)

(*Alice Harrington is a delightful woman of thirty-four, in love with her husband, aware of his foibles, humoring them and yet maintaing a maternal watchfulness over him. She is very smart. She has an ingenious realization of her own sarcasm and irony that takes the sting out of her remarks. She is never bitter, merely humorous.*)

ALICE—(*In his arms, patting him on back*)—You dear old thing.

NORA—(*R of table, as Monty Vaughan enters. Monty is a good-looking young man of twenty-five or twenty-six, with a slight mustache which he is continually fussing with. He is Denby's opposite—timid, high strung, nervous, but basically not really a coward*)—Hello, Monty!

MONTY—(*Shaking her hand enthusiastically*)—It's bully to find you here. I nearly hugged you.

NORA—Well, why didn't you?

MONTY—(*Stretching out arms*)—I've a half mind to.

NORA—(*To Alice*)—No, not now. It's cold. Hugs must be spontaneous.

ALICE—(*To Nora*)—Where's Ethel?

NORA—We didn't expect you for another half hour—she's upstairs, changing—she'll be down in a minute.

MONTY—(*Over R to Michael*)—I say, old man, why weren't you down at the dock?

MICHAEL—Wife's orders.

ALICE—I should say so. I know of no greater nuisance than having people meet you at the pier.—(*To Michael*)—You were very obedient.

MONTY—The perfect husband!

ALICE—(*Smiling*)—Well, I wouldn't say *that*——

MONTY—(*To Alice, as he looks at his hands*)—If you don't mind, I'll go and wash up. (*To Nora*)—I've got almost all of Long Island in my eyes.—(*He starts to go R. Alice and Michael move L so that Alice can sit in arm chair.*)

NORA—Go ahead—perhaps you'll be able to see me better then.

MONTY—(*Behind couch*)—I couldn't see you better if I tried. I'll meet you in the pagoda in five minutes.—(*As he goes*)—It's mighty nice to see a pretty girl again, who talks American.

NORA—As if men cared what girls say—— It's the way they look that counts.—(*Monty exits door R.*)

MICHAEL—(*To Alice*)—Did you have a good trip?

ALICE—(*Sits arm chair L of table*)—Bully—Steven Denby's most attractive and mysterious.

MICHAEL—(*L of Alice back to fire*)—Denby? Oh, yes, I'd quite forgotten he was coming. Where is he?

ALICE—The limousine was so full of Monty and me and bags and things we put him in the big car. They had a blow out five miles from here but he'll be along presently.

NORA—(*Drop down R of table to stool in front*)—What Mr. Denby is he?

MICHAEL—Yes, I never heard of him—who is he?

ALICE—Perhaps that's what makes him so mysterious—I haven't the least idea.

MICHAEL—Then why on earth have him down here?

ALICE—Because Monty suggested it. They went to school and college or some thing together—and because, even if I *am* married—(*Smiling at Michael*)—love has not made me blind to *other* charming men.

NORA—Will I like him?

ALICE—I did the minute I met him—he has a sort of "come hither" in his eyes and the kind of hair I always want to run my hand through. You will, too, Nora.

NORA—But you see I'm not a married woman, so I haven't your privileges.

ALICE—Don't be absurd. I haven't done it—but I may.

MICHAEL—I don't in the least doubt it!

ALICE—He has such an air—sort of secret and wicked. He might be a murderer or something fascinating.

MICHAEL—Splendid fellow for a week end!

ALICE—(*Looks at her watch. Rises and is going*)—Heavens! I ought to dress.

NORA—(*Goes round R of table and up L to stairs*)—Come on. I can't imagine what's keeping Ethel.

MICHAEL—(*As Alice moves toward stairs*)—Oh, just a minute, Alice.

ALICE—Run along, Nora—I'll be right up.

NORA—I'll go wait for Monty. I think you're going to be lectured.—(*She exits at French windows.*)

ALICE—What is it?

MICHAEL—(*Brings her down to L of table, she on his R*)—I just wanted to tell you how mighty glad I am to see you.

ALICE—And, Mikey, dear—I'm mighty glad to see you.

MICHAEL—Are you really? You're not missing Paris.

ALICE—Oh, Paris be hanged. I'm in love with a man—not a town!

MICHAEL—It's still me?

ALICE—Always you! One big reason I like to go abroad is because it makes me so glad to get back to you.—(*She sits on arm of chair.*)

MICHAEL—(*Playfully reproving*)—See here, now, every time I want a little trot around the country and suggest leaving, you begin——

ALICE—Oh, that's very different. When we do separate I always want to be the one to leave, not to be left.

MICHAEL—(*Nodding his head*)—It *is* much easier to go than to stay. I've been pretty lonely these last six weeks.

ALICE—Even with all the Scotch you wanted?

MICHAEL—'Tisn't nearly as much fun to drink when you're away. It takes the sport out of it not to be stopped.

ALICE—Fibber!

MICHAEL—Well, most of the sport.—(*Holding her off at arm's length.*)—Do you know I sometimes wonder whatever made you marry me.

ALICE—Sometimes I wonder, too—but not often! I really think we're the ideal married couple.

MICHAEL—Do you, honestly?

ALICE—Yes. We're sentimental when we're alone and critical when we've guests.

MICHAEL—That's true—most people hate each other in private and love each other in public.—(*He hugs her.*)

ALICE—You *are* a dear old thing.

MICHAEL—Do you know, I don't feel a bit married. I just feel in love.

ALICE—(*Rises*)—That's the nicest thing you ever said to me.—(*She kisses him.*)—But I must find Ethel.—(*He is holding her hands.*)

MICHAEL—You know you've made me fairly dizzy. I need a drink to sober up.

ALICE—(*Drawing away from him*)—I believe you've been trying to get around me just for that.

MICHAEL—Oh, no you don't.

ALICE—No, I don't Mikey.—(*Monty and Nora enter at French window.*)

NORA—(*L of Monty by window*)—Heavens, still lecturing, you two?

MONTY—You do look rather henpecked, Mr. Harrington.

MICHAEL—Yes, we've been having a dreadful row.

ALICE—Now, I *am* going upstairs to see Ethel.—(*She exits. Michael waits till she has gone upstairs, then crosses to Monty and Nora.*)

MICHAEL—I think I'll go for my one solitary cocktail.—(*Crosses them and turns.*)—In my own private bar, but keep that confidential.—(*He exits R. There is a slight pause.*)

MONTY—(*Going toward French windows*)—I wonder where the deuce Steve is? A blow out oughtn't to keep him all this time.

NORA—What's the matter with you, Monty?

MONTY—Me?—(*Turns to her.*)—Nothing.—(*Suddenly*)—What's that?

Nora—What?

MONTY—Oh, nothing.

NORA—(*Crosses toward couch*)—You never used to have a nerve in your body—now—you jump at everything.

MONTY—(*Coming down to her L*)—Why, I guess I am a bit nervous. Steve and I are in a big deal together—and it's got me sort of anxious.

NORA—You don't mean to say you've gone into business?

MONTY—Well, it's not exactly business—it's something secret.

NORA—Well, if it frightens you so, why go in it?

MONTY—Well, everything was sort of tepid in Paris.

NORA—Tepid—in Paris?!

MONTY—Well, even Paris can get like that when you live

there. I wanted excitement, and when Steve told me about his scheme——

NORA—(*Crosses to couch; she sits at L side*)—Oh, if it's exciting tell me about it.

MONTY—I wish I could but I promised Steve. We're pretty old friends.

NORA—I know, I know. You and he went to college together and sang "a stein on the table" and went on sprees together, and made love to the same girls, and played on the same teams. I know all that college stuff.

MONTY—But we didn't go to college together.

NORA—But Alice said you did.

MONTY—(*Anxiously*)—Oh, did she?

NORA—Well anyhow, don't be reminiscent, Monty. I hate men's reminiscences. They make me so darned envious. I wish I'd been a man.

MONTY—(*Smiling*)—I don't.

NORA—Don't try to flirt with me.

MONTY—Why not?

NORA—You don't know how.

MONTY—Teach me.

NORA—It can't be taught. It's got to be born in you.—(*Pause. She looks down. He leans on back of couch.*)—Well, go on.

MONTY—(*Reflectively*)—I wonder where Steve is.

NORA—(*Exasperated*)—You're hopeless! I don't know where "Steve" is and frankly I don't care. I hope he's under the car with gasoline dripping in his eyes.

MONTY—(*Coming to her—suddenly*)—Do you know, Nora, for the last year there's been something trembling on my lips——

NORA—(*Ecstatically*)—Oh, Monty, don't shave it off—I love it.

(*Alice and Ethel come downstairs in order named. Michael enters from right at the same time wiping mustache, works back to L of Ethel.*)

NORA—(*Rising*)—Here's Ethel.

ALICE—Monty, I want you to know my very best friend, Miss Cartwright, Mr. Vaughan.—(*She goes around back of them toward couch.*)

ETHEL—(*Offering hand*)—How do you do?

MONTY—(*At back of table shakes her hand. Alice to stool R of table*)—How do you do?

MICHAEL—(*At fire place*)—Be kind to him, Ethel, he's a nice boy.

NORA—(*Sitting on couch*)—And an awful flirt.

MONTY—Oh, I say——

ALICE—(*Sitting on stool*)—Are you a flirt?

MONTY—No.

ALICE—Of course he never dares flirt with me. That's the penalty of age. I've known him a disgracefully long time—ever since the Palisades were that high.

ETHEL—(*Down to arm chair L of table*)—I'm sorry I couldn't get down to the dock to meet you, Alice.

ALICE—Thank heaven you didn't.

ETHEL—But I had some business——

MICHAEL—Business in August? I say, you do look a bit fagged—no bad news I hope.

ETHEL—(*Nervously*)—I was afraid it might be but it came out better than I hoped.

ALICE—How's Amy?

ETHEL—(*Nervously*)—Oh, she's all right.

MICHAEL—We ought to have had her down here.

ALICE—No, we shouldn't. I didn't intend it to be a big party, and, anyhow, young men are scarce in August.

MONTY—(*Standing by couch*)—I wonder where Steve is? He ought to have fixed that tire by now.

NORA—Why *do* they call those tires *quick* detachable?

ALICE—I hope he hasn't gone over the cliff.

MICHAEL—So do I. It was a mighty good car, too—almost new.

ETHEL—Is someone else coming?

ALICE—A perfectly charming man—Steven Denby.

ETHEL—(*Her face lighting up*)—Steven Denby?

ALICE—Yes. Do you know him?

ETHEL—Indeed I do.—(*Nora rises.*)

MONTY—(*Surprised*)—You know Steve?

NORA (*Over beside Alice*)—Tell us about him.

MICHAEL—Who is he?—(*Monty drops down R.*)

ALICE—Isn't he fascinating?

ETHEL—I *know* him and that's really all I can tell you. I met him in Paris a year ago.

ALICE—Didn't you like him?

ETHEL—(*Frankly*)—Yes, I did, very much.

NORA—(*Disappointed*)—Well, he's evidently yours for this week end.

ETHEL—Oh, I dare say he won't even remember me.

NORA—Oh, I'll bet he will, and I'll just have to stick around with Monty.—(*Turns to him.*)

MONTY—(*Grandly*)—Oh, I don't particularly mind.—(*Dressing bell rings, off stage.*)

MICHAEL—(*Rises*)—Time to dress, good people.

ALICE—(*Turning at stairs*)—Come, Nora; come, Monty. You'll have to amuse yourself, Ethel; you can't depend on Michael. —(*Monty exits.*)

MICHAEL—Quite right, my dear.

NORA—I think I'll go strum a bit.—(*She exits door right.*)

MICHAEL (*Crosses toward door R*)—I'm going for my one solitary cocktail.

ALICE—(*At Stairs*)—And only one!

MICHAEL—You know me, my dear.

ALICE—That's why I said only one—and wait for Mr. Denby —tell him we'll be down in a minute.

MICHAEL—I'll send him in to Ethel.—(*Alice exits upstairs.*)

ETHEL—Yes, do. (*Michael exits door R. Motor horn is heard in distance. Ethel goes up and looks out of French window. Motor horn is heard in short, full blast. Ethel goes down to couch*

and arranges herself as if in anticipation of Denby's arrival. Confused murmur heard off of Michael welcoming Denby.)

(Steven Denby enters R. Denby is a young man of thirty or thirty-one, charming, good looking, with, as Mrs. Harrington says, a "come hither" in his eye. He is cool, self-possessed, quiet; nothing ruffles him. He takes adventures as they come—and let 'em come often! He is the kind that women pursue and yet men respect. He is a man's man and a woman's lover. He crosses toward stairs; Ethel attracts his attention with a cough. He turns and sees her.)

DENBY—(*Most enthusiastically. Crosses to her offering his hand*)—Why, how do you do, Miss Cartwright?

ETHEL—(*Graciously, shaking hands*)—How do you do, Mr. Denby?

DENBY—Mr. Harrington said there was a surprise in here for me, but I had no idea it would be so delightful—how are you?

ETHEL—(*Gaily*)—Splendid—and you?

DENBY—Grateful to be here——

ETHEL—I didn't think you'd remember me.

DENBY—Remember you? Why it was only day before yesterday we were in Paris.—(*They both sit.*)

ETHEL—What are you doing in America?—(*Piano starts off stage with some light waltz.*)

DENBY—Oh, I thought I needed a run over to see if New York was finished yet.

ETHEL—Are you still doing—nothing?

DENBY—Still—nothing.

ETHEL—Ah—I did have hopes of you.

DENBY—(*Meaningly*)—And I of you.

ETHEL—(*Changing the subject*)—I'm afraid I don't admire idlers—— Why don't you do something?

DENBY—It's so difficult to get a thrill out of business.

ETHEL—And you must have thrills?

DENBY—Yes, it's such a dull, old world nowadays.

ETHEL (*Jokingly*)—Why don't you take to crime?

DENBY—(*Mockingly*)—Ah, the stake's too high—a thrill against prison!

ETHEL—Oh, you want little thrills?

DENBY—No, a big one—life or death—but not prison—— (*Piano stops*)—And you? You are still doing nothing, too?

ETHEL—Nothing.

DENBY—Still Miss Cartwright?

ETHEL—*Only* Miss Cartwright.

DENBY—(*Leaning towards her*)—Good!—(*Embarrassed as she looks quickly at him*)—By George, it doesn't seem a year since that week in Paris.

ETHEL—No, it doesn't.

DENBY—What made you disappear just as we were having such bully times?

ETHEL—I had to come back to America suddenly; I had only an hour to catch the boat—didn't you get my note?

DENBY—Of course I didn't. I thought you'd dropped me. I tell you I hit with an awful crash.

ETHEL—(*Encouragingly*)—No, I hadn't dropped you—in fact, I thought it was just the other way.

DENBY—I should say not! I did try to see you when I was over here six months ago, but you were at Palm Beach.—(*Whimsically.*)—I can't tell you how often I've sent you telepathic messages—ever get any of 'em?

ETHEL—Some of them, I think. . . . And now we meet on Long Island. It's a far cry to Paris.

DENBY—Oh, it's people who make places—the places themselves don't matter—you and I are here.

ETHEL—(*Sighing*)—Still, Paris is Paris.

DENBY—(*Sighing*)—Rather! Do you remember that afternoon in front of the Café de la Paix? We had Vin Gris and watched the Frenchman with the funny dog, and the boys calling La Presse—— (*Piano starts "Un Peu d'Amour"*)—and the old woman with her news-stand?

ETHEL—(*Romantically*)—And there was a hole in the table-cloth!

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—And wasn't it a dirty table-cloth?.—(*Romantic*)—And we had tea in the Bois at the Cascade, and the Hungarian Band played "Un Peu—— (*He hears piano playing "Un Peu d'Amour" and marks the coincidence.*)—"Un Peu d'Amour."—(*They listen to it for a second; she hums.*)

ETHEL—(*Romantically*)—And the poor skinny horse in our fiacre fell down and we walked all the way home out of pity.

DENBY—You were tender hearted.

ETHEL—Do you remember the dinner at Vian's that night—— (*Pause*)—Wasn't the soup awful?

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—Ah, but the string beans!

ETHEL—The string beans were an event.

DENBY—And afterward I can remember a moon over the Bois as we sat under the trees, can you?

ETHEL—(*Softly*)—Yes.—(*Piano stops.*)

DENBY—(*Leaning over her*)—And the day we went through the whole Louvre—(*Pause*)—in an hour—and the loveliest picture I saw was—*you!*—(*Pause. He sighs. She sighs. Pause. Lambart interrupts the picture. He comes from R U.*)

LAMBART—Pardon me—(*Denby coughs, embarrassed, and walks away*)—there is a gentleman to see you, Miss Cartwright.—(*He hands her card on tray.*)

ETHEL—(*Rises*)—To see me?—(*She takes card; looks at it, startled.*)—Ask him to come in.—(*Turns to Denby*)—Will you forgive me?

DENBY—(*Going*)—Surely—I must dress, anyhow.

LAMBART—Your room is at the head of the stairs, sir.—(*Lambart exits L.*)

DENBY—(*On stairs*)—Till dinner?

ETHEL—Till dinner.—(*Denby exits upstairs. Ethel shows great anxiety. In a moment Taylor enters.*)

TAYLOR—(*Enters door L. Genially*)—Good evening, Miss Cartwright.—(*He puts hat on small table near French window.*)

ETHEL—(*Trembling*)—My sister? Nothing's happened? She's alright?

TAYLOR—Sure, sure, I haven't bothered her—the little lady's alright.

ETHEL—(*Alarmed*)—What are you doing here?

TAYLOR—I thought I'd drop in in reference to our little chat this afternoon.—(*He crosses R. Ethel up to stair, looking off. He looks about.*)—Ah, nice place here.

ETHEL—Yes, but——

TAYLOR—I suppose you remember our conversation?

ETHEL—(*Coming down*)—Of course, of course.

TAYLOR—You said when I needed you, you would be ready. —(*During this scene he glances around apprehensively.*)—Well, I need you now.

ETHEL—Now? But I don't understand.

TAYLOR—A man smuggled a two hundred thousand dollar necklace through the customs to-day. For various reasons we allowed him to slip through thinking he'd fooled us. Now that he believes himself safe it ought to be easy to get that necklace. In fact, we've got to get it—through you.

ETHEL—Through me? But I wouldn't know how to act—what to do.

TAYLOR—You're too modest, Miss Cartwright. I'm quite sure you'll be very successful.

ETHEL—But I'm spending Sunday here—I couldn't very well make an excuse to leave now.

TAYLOR—You don't have to leave.

ETHEL—What?

TAYLOR—The man who smuggled that necklace is staying here—his name is Steven Denby.

ETHEL—(*Startled*)—Steven Denby? You must be mad—he isn't a smuggler.

TAYLOR—Why isn't he?

ETHEL—I know him.

TAYLOR—You do? Where did you meet him?

ETHEL—In Paris.

TAYLOR—How long have you known him?

ETHEL—A year.

TAYLOR—What do you know about him? What's his business—what does he do?

ETHEL—Why—nothing.

TAYLOR—Nothing, eh? Well that hardly proves he's not a smuggler.

ETHEL—I'm sure you're wrong. He's my friend.

TAYLOR—Your friend!—(*Change to insinuating tone*)—Well, that ought to make it much easier for you to get him.

ETHEL—I'm certain he is absolutely innocent.

TALYOR—This is your chance to prove it.

ETHEL—But I couldn't spy on a friend.

TAYLOR—If he's innocent it can't make any difference, he'd never know—if he's guilty he deserves punishment—you've no right to try to protect him. You would merely be doing your duty in helping to detect a criminal.

ETHEL—No, no, I can't do it.

TAYLOR—You're going back on your agreement, eh? Suppose I go back on mine?

ETHEL—You wouldn't do that.

Taylor—It's give and take in this world.

ETHEL—But I couldn't be so contemptible.

TAYLOR—(*Meaningly*)—Now you'd better think it over, Miss Cartwright. I would if I were you.

ETHEL—But suppose you're wrong—suppose Mr. Denby has no necklace—then——

TAYLOR—Don't you worry about that. Our information is positive. We got a telegram late this afternoon from a pal of his who's squealed giving us the tip about the necklace. Well, what do you say?

ETHEL—Oh, I can't—I can't.

TAYLOR—(*With menace*)—It's Steven Denby—or your sister. Which are you going to choose?

ETHEL—(*Quietly*)—Then I have no choice. What do you want me to do?

TAYLOR—Good! Denby has that necklace concealed in a tobacco pouch, a brown leather tobacco pouch, he always carries in his pocket—you must get that pouch.

ETHEL—Ssh! How can I?

TAYLOR—I'll leave that to you.

ETHEL—(*Pleadingly*)—But why ask me—can't you do it?

TAYLOR—It may be a bluff, some clever scheme to throw me off the track. I'm not going to risk a mix up with the Harringtons, or tip my hand until I'm absolutely sure. Denby's your friend—you can easily find out. If you discover the necklace is in that tobacco pouch, get Denby to go for a walk in the garden, say you want to look at the moon, say anything, but get him in the garden and we'll grab him there.

ETHEL—But he might go out there alone.

TAYLOR—If he comes alone we won't touch him, but if he comes with you we'll *know*.

ETHEL—But if I can't get him to go into the garden?

TAYLOR—If you're sure he has it on him—or if you make certain just where he has concealed it—— (*Looks around thinking for a second or two*)—Pull down one of those window shades. My men and I can see those windows from the pagoda. When we get that signal we'll come in and arrest him—you understand?

ETHEL—Pull down the window shade!

TAYLOR—Yes; but be careful. Don't bring him out in the garden and don't signal, unless you are absolutely positive.

ETHEL—Yes, yes.

TAYLOR—And under no circumstances must you mention my name..

ETHEL—But——

TAYLOR—There's no "but" about it. It is most important to the United States Government and to me that my identity is in no way disclosed.

ETHEL—But it may be necessary.

TAYLOR—It *cannot* be necessary. If you tell Denby I'm after him—if it comes to a show down—I'll not only swear I never saw you before—but I'll put your sister in prison.

DENBY—(*Heard off stage*)—Thanks very much, Lambart.

TAYLOR—(*Hurriedly going up to French window*)—Good evening, Miss Cartwright. Don't forget you get Denby to-night.—(*He exits. Ethel is left there miserable and wretched. Dinner chimes ring off stage. Denby comes down stairs.*)

DENBY—Ah, dinner. Come, I wish it were Paris, with the hole in the table-cloth, and the eventful string beans, and the gay old moon—but, after all, what do they matter? It's a great world—you're here, and I'm hungry. Are you hungry?—(*They are walking off R, as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN.

(*Curtain remains down thirty seconds to indicate a lapse of two hours until after dinner.*)

SCENE 2.

(*Curtain rises on a dark stage. Lambart enters from R, turns up lights and exits L U. During this Ethel, Nora and Alice are heard talking. At Lambart's exit, they enter.*)

NORA—(*To couch*)—What I can't see is why we didn't stay and have our cigarettes with the men.

ALICE—Oh, I always leave the men together; that's the way I always get the newest naughty stories. Michael tells 'em to me later.

NORA—Alice!

ALICE—(*At R of table C*)—Oh, I like 'em when they're really funny; so does everybody else. Besides, nowadays it's improper to be proper. Cigarette, Ethel?

ETHEL—(*Who has got by mantel, now crosses to table and sits in front of it*)—You know I don't smoke.

NORA—That's so old fashioned. I'd rather die than be that. I do wish, though, I enjoyed smoking.—(*Coughs slightly.*)

ALICE—(*Sits stool R of table*)—Nora, what did you think of our new friend, Mr. Denby?

NORA—I like him in spite of the fact that he didn't notice me. He couldn't take his eyes off Ethel.

ALICE—I saw that myself. You know, Ethel, I meant him to take you in to dinner, but Nora insisted that she sit next to him. She's such a man-hunter.

NORA—(*R of C*)—You bet I am—that's the only way you can get 'em.

ALICE—Didn't you and Mr. Denby have a tiny, tiny row? You hardly spoke to him all through dinner.

ETHEL—Didn't I? I've a bit of a headache.

NORA—I'll bet they had a lovers' quarrel before dinner.

ALICE—(*Smilingly interested*)—A lovers' quarrel?

NORA—Certainly. I'm sure Ethel's in love with him.

ETHEL—(*Rise; embarrassed*)—How perfectly ridiculous. Nora, don't be silly. I met him for a week in Paris, that's all. I did find him interesting. He had big talk as well as small, but as for love—please don't be idiotic.—(*Crosses to fender seat and stands.*)

ALICE—Methinks the lady doth protest too much!

NORA—Well, I don't blame you—if he'd give me a chance I'd fall for him in a minute, but attractive men never bother about me. The best I can draw is Monty. I'm beginning to dislike the whole sex.—(*Step to R.*)

ALICE—Theoretically you are quite right, my dear. Men are awful things,—God bless 'em—but practically—well—some day you'll explode like a bottle of champagne and bubble out all over some man.

NORA—(*Step to L*)—Speaking of champagne, I wish I had another of Michael's purple drinks.—(*Crosses to Alice.*)

ALICE—Do tell him that. The surest way to Michael's heart is through his buffet. He's taken to mixing cocktails now in a graduated chemist's glass. He should have been a bartender.

NORA—Is he drinking as much as ever?

ALICE—When I am at home? I should say not. Nothing after one a. m. If he goes to bed then he's all right; if he doesn't he sits up till five going the pace that fills. I wouldn't mind if it made him amusing, but it doesn't—it merely makes him sleepy. For heaven's sake, Nora, do sit down.

NORA—(*Crosses to L of Alice*)—I can't. I always stand up for twenty minutes after each meal. It keeps you thin.

ALICE—(*Eagerly*)—Does it?—(*Rising*)—Does it, really?—(*Comfortably*)—Still, I lost nine pounds abroad.

NORA—Goodness! How?

ALICE—Buttermilk.

NORA—I walked four miles this morning in a rubber suit and three sweaters, and *gained* half a pound.

ALICE—I do wish hips would come in again.

(*Michael, Monty and Denby heard speaking off; they enter R.*)

(*Nora crosses to L back of table.*)

DENBY—It's a delicious liqueur.

(*Alice has crossed over to couch and Nora behind table meets Denby.*)

MICHAEL—I used to think so too before my wife stopped my drinking.—(*Denby comes to Ethel.*)

MONTY—(*Back of couch R*)—Fine stuff. I can still feel it warming up all the little nooks and crannies.

DENBY—Purple but pleasing.

ALICE—Michael, did they tell you any stories—purple stories?

DENBY—(*Standing behind table C*)—We don't know any new stories, we've been in England.

ALICE—Do sit down, all of you. We've been standing up to get thin.

MICHAEL—Come on. If they're going to discuss getting thin, let's get out.

MONTY—Woman's favorite topic.—(*Alice sits down.*)

NORA—(*Coming around table; to Alice*)—But you mustn't sit down yet. It isn't twenty minutes.

ALICE—Well, I think it's twenty minutes and if it isn't I don't give a damn.

MICHAEL—Women are so self-denying!—(*Denby moves over, standing L of table C.*)

ALICE—By the way, Nora, there was a girl on the boat who lost twelve pounds.

MICHAEL—Twelve pounds! Why that's sixty dollars. How women gamble.

ALICE—Pounds of flesh—pounds of flesh. She was on a diet—she didn't eat for four days.

NORA—Oh, that's a fine idea. I must try it sometime—when I'm not hungry!—(*Nora sits front of table C.*)

ETHEL—(*Suddenly coming into the conversation*)—Speaking of the boat, Alice, what did you smuggle in?

(*Denby gives her a quick look, then smiles at the folly of his suspicion.*)

(*During this talk about smuggling, Monty looks anxiously at Denby and foot by foot, watching him, moves over till he is behind table C.*)

ALICE—Not a thing this time. I declared every solitary stitch.

MICHAEL—(*Sits*)—I'd like to believe you—but knowing you as I do——

ALICE—I paid seven hundred dollars duty.

NORA—Disgusting.

MICHAEL—What mental revolution was responsible for your deciding that smuggling is wrong.

ALICE—I don't think it's wrong—you men seem to—but I'd swindle the government any day.

NORA—Then for heaven's sake why—— ,

ALICE—Behold my reformer, Mr. Denby.

ETHEL—(*Suspicious and nervous, speaks quickly*)—Mr. Denby?

NORA—What did he have to do with it?

(*Ethel has little part in the following conversation, but is most keen, alert, and watchful.*)

ALICE—He frightened me.

MICHAEL—I want to have a good look at the man who can do that.

DENBY—I'm afraid Mrs. Harrington is exaggerating. I merely explained that things lately had been in rather a muddle at the customs.

ALICE—They didn't give us the least bother at the dock.

DENBY—That sometimes means the greatest possible trouble afterwards.

NORA—How can it?

DENBY—Well, according to some articles in McClure's a few months ago, by Burns—— (*Turns to Ethel.*)

NORA—Oh, was it in dialect? I love Scotch stories.

DENBY—(*To Nora*)—I'm afraid you're thinking of the wrong Burns; this wasn't Bobby, the poet. It was Bill, the detective.

ETHEL—What did he have to say about it?

DENBY—It seems that very often a dishonest official will let a prominent woman, like Mrs. Harrington, slip through the lines without the least difficulty—even if she is smuggling—only afterward to come to her home, threaten exposure and a heavy fine. Usually the woman or her husband will pay largely to hush things up. That's why I advised Mrs. Harrington to declare everything.

ALICE—Even so, I'd never have listened to you if you hadn't scared me half to death with that talk about R. J.

ETHEL—What's R. J.?

MICHAEL—Sounds like a collar or a corset.

ALICE—He's one of those frightfully clever detectives who "git you if you don't watch out."

NORA—Oh, he sounds fun. I adore detectives. I read Sherlock Holmes six times. Do tell us about him, Mr. Denby.

DENBY—I know very little—just that he's supposed to be one of those impossible secret service agents, travelling incognito, all over the place. He's known only by his initials—R. J. The stormy petrel, some people call him, always in the wake of trouble. Where there is intrigue, diplomatic tangles—if the Japs steal a fortification plan—or Germany sends a cross country aeroplane to drop a bomb on the Singer Building, R. J.'s supposed to be there—and catch the bomb.

NORA—What an awfully unpleasant position!

DENBY—You see I thought I ought to tell Mrs. Harrington about him, because we heard in Paris that he was busy over here, now—with the customs.

MICHAEL—But what I can't see is—suppose Alice had smuggled and she came through without any fuss, as she did, how on earth, without a search, could they know she had anything dutiable, and if they didn't know that how could they blackmail her?

DENBY—Oh, that's the simplest part of it—the clerk in Paris who sells you a set of sables or some rare bit of lace, is most of the time a government spy, unofficially, and directly after he has assured you: "It is simple to smuggle, one can hide things so easily" he is cabling the customs here of your purchase.

MICHAEL—They do that? I never did trust Frenchmen—the sneaks!

ETHEL—(*Rise, leaning forward, coquettishly to Denby*)—Tell me truly, Mr. Denby, didn't you smuggle something, just one tiny little scarf pin?

DENBY—(*Turning to her*)—Truly, nothing—not even one tiny little scarf. What makes you think I did?

ETHEL—It seemed to me that your protection of Mrs. Harrington was so very insistent you must have been afraid that she, less clever than you—would be caught.

DENBY—But how could that affect me?

ETHEL—If she were found out that might direct suspicion to you.

MICHAEL—That sounds plausible—come on, Denby, fess up, what did you bring in?

DENBY—Only myself and Monty—but you see he isn't dutiable. (*Monty goes up to window and in a moment strolls back to table.*)

ETHEL—Well, I'm not convinced, Mr. Denby, that it wasn't one thought for Alice and two for yourself.

MICHAEL—(*Rising*)—Come on, Denby, tell us——

NORA—(*Rising and coming to Denby*)—Oh, do! It'd be so nice if you were a criminal—and had your picture in the Rogues' Gallery.

ALICE—Yes, do tell us, Mr. Denby.

MICHAEL—We'll keep mum, we won't turn you over to the police.

ETHEL—You're safe with us.

DENBY—Oh, I'm sure of that—so sure that if I had anything to tell I'd tell it.

NORA—That's always the way—every time I meet a man who seems exciting, he turns out to be just a nice man—I hate nice men! —(*Goes and stands by Monty behind table.*)

ETHEL—Yes—you are a disappointment—couldn't you think of any new way to smuggle?

DENBY—Oh, it wasn't lack of ingenuity—just respect for the law.

MICHAEL—I didn't know we had that in America any more.

ETHEL—(*Taking cigarette box from mantel, crossing left to Monty, then to Michael.*)—Cigarettes, gentlemen?

MONTY—(*Taking one*)—Thanks very much, Miss Cartwright.

MICHAEL—No, I want something I can get my teeth in.

ETHEL—(*Crossing back to R of Denby*)—You, Mr. Denby?

DENBY—Thanks, no—I'll roll my own—if you don't mind.—(*He has taken pouch from pocket and starts to roll a cigarette. Ethel starts as she sees the pouch, and shuts the cigarette box with a click.*)

NORA—Oh, can't you do it with one hand—like the cowboys do in books?

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—I'm sorry to disappoint you again, but I find two hands barely enough.

ETHEL—Sometime you must roll me one, will you?

DENBY—With pleasure.—(*He finishes the rolling and lights his cigarette.*)

ALICE—But you don't smoke.

ETHEL—Ah, but I've been tempted.

NORA—The only thing that makes my life worth living is yielding to temptation.

MICHAEL—(*Rising*)—Well, I'm thirsty,—who'll split a pint of Brut Imperial?

ALICE—(*Rising*)—That's your last drink to-night.

MICHAEL—I'm not likely to forget it—you know, my wife thinks I'm a restaurant—she closes me up at one sharp.

ALICE—Shall we have some bridge, Ethel?

ETHEL—Thanks, no, I've given it up.

NORA—(*Surprised*)—Why you used to love it.

ETHEL—I've come to think that all gambling is—horrible.

MICHAEL—Me too, unless stocks go up or the Democratic party goes down I'll be broke soon. How about a game of pool? —(*Crosses to door R.*)

NORA—(*Enthusiastically*)—I've never played, but I'd like to learn.

MONTY—That'll make it a nice game!

ALICE—I suppose there's nothing else to do but turkey trot. Come, Nora.

MICHAEL—Well, I'll play pool or bridge or poker—I'll sit or talk or sing, but I'll be hanged if I'll turkey trot.

ALICE—Oh, if you were only light footed instead of light headed.—(*Alice and Michael exit R.*)

NORA—Coming Monty?—(*She follows Michael and Alice off R.*)

MONTY—Sure, but I'd much rather tango.—(*He starts to go R.*)

DENBY—(*Detaining him*)—Oh, Monty.

ETHEL—Aren't you playing, Mr. Denby?

DENBY—In just a moment. There's something I want to say to Monty.

ETHEL—(*Crossing up between the men toward Door R*)—I know—man's God—business.

MONTY—We have rather a big deal on——

DENBY—Yes, a two hundred thousand dollar proposition—so we're a bit anxious.

ETHEL—(*A look on the mention of the amount*)—I should think anyone would be—in your place—but don't be too long, I shall want that cigarette presently.—(*She goes out door R. Denby stands looking after her.*)

DENBY—Bully, bully girl.

MONTY—(*Anxiously at left of couch R*)—Anything wrong, Steve?

DENBY—(*Coming out of his trance and down to Monty*)—I don't understand why they haven't done anything. I'm certain we were followed from the dock.

MONTY—Why, you're crazy. If they'd had the least idea about the necklace they'd have pinched you at the pier.

DENBY—That's just what makes me suspicious—they let us slide through too easily.

MONTY—They were mighty casual.

DENBY—And Cartier's must have tipped off some of the customs crowd that I got the necklace there. It all looks fishy. They're up to some new dodge.

MONTY—You're too fidgety.

DENBY—You don't know the game as I do.—(*He goes around table to light switch up on center wall by window*)—Get over by that window.—(*Monty starts hurriedly for the window*)—Easy, easy.—(*Denby has got to light switch and quickly turns it—the lights go out—leaving stage in darkness except for the moon light coming through the French windows.*)

MONTY—(*Excitedly*)—What the dev——

DENBY—Is any one there on the lawn?

MONTY—No. . . . By Jove, yes there is—there's a man over by the big oak.

DENBY—What's he doing?

MONTY—Just standing, looking over this way.

DENBY—He's watching this house. Anybody with him?

MONTY—No.

DENBY—Come away, Monty.—(*He switches lights on*)—Now do you believe they've followed us?

MONTY—The chills are running up and down my spine. Gee, I hope we don't have a fight.

DENBY—Don't be nervous, old man, they won't touch you.

MONTY—They won't? Those fellows are likely to shoot first and explain afterward.

DENBY—(*Quoting Monty's previous speech*)—Nonsense, you're too fidgety.

MONTY—Why the deuce don't they come in?

DENBY—I think they'll stay out to keep us in.

MONTY—I hope they do.

DENBY—They must have someone here on the inside—working under cover to try to get the necklace.

MONTY—Who can it be?

DENBY—(*Up to window*)—That's what we've got to find out, and then, Monty—then we'll have some sport.

MONTY—(*Disgustedly*)—Then we'll have some shooting. Say, where's that necklace now?

DENBY—(*Up at French windows looking out; Monty back to audience*)—Still in my tobacco pouch.—(*Ethel opens door R very quietly and stands listening*)—I know they mean business. This is going to be a fight, Monty—a fight to the finish.—(*Monty sees Ethel and interrupts Denby, sharply.*)

MONTY—Will you have a cigarette, Dick?—(*Denby wheels about quickly—picture—Ethel seeing she is discovered, comes down smiling.*)

ETHEL—Still talking business? I left my fan here somewhere.

DENBY—Girls are always doing that, aren't they? We'll help you find it, eh, Monty?

MONTY—(*Nervously, crosses to sofa*)—Sure, Steve, sure.

ETHEL—Steve? But as I came in I thought I heard you call him Dick.

MONTY—(*Embarrassed*)—Who? Me? Why——

DENBY—(*Promptly*)—Oh, that was a signal in our private code.

ETHEL—It sounds mysterious.

DENBY—It's only commonplace. My favorite parlor trick is making breaks, and good old Monty has invented a signal to warn me when I'm on dangerous ground. 'Will you have a cigarette, Dick,' he says.

MONTY—(*Relieved*)—Yes, that's it.

ETHEL—But why, Dick?

DENBY—Oh, that's the signal—if he said Steve I mightn't notice it—so he always says Dick; don't you, Monty?

MONTY—Always, Steve.

ETHEL—(*Gaily*)—Were you about to make a break when I came in?

DENBY—I'm afraid I was.

ETHEL—What was it—do tell me?

DENBY—Ah, if I told you then it would indeed be a break.

ETHEL—Discreet man! You must have been talking about me.

DENBY—You are imaginative—even about your fan—there doesn't seem to be a sign of it here.—(*He goes toward fire-place.*)

ETHEL—(*Going toward stairs*)—I dare say it must be in my room. May I have that promised cigarette now to cheer me on my way?

DENBY—Surely.—(*He takes pouch from pocket and rolls cigarette.*)

MONTY—Can't I get your fan for you?

ETHEL—No; you'd have to rummage and that's a privilege I reserve only for myself.

DENBY—Here you are.

ETHEL—(*Taking cigarette; licks it and puts it in mouth*)—You are expert.

DENBY—Match?—(*Offering one lighted.*)

ETHEL—Thanks—(*He lights her cigarette; she takes one puff amateurishly—gives slight cough*)—What a delicious cigarette.—(*Denby turns away and smiles; she holds out hand and touches pouch showing she wishes to get hold of it*)—What sort of tobacco is it?

DENBY—(*Not giving her the pouch*)—Without fire.

ETHEL—Without fire?

DENBY—Yes. You see, no smoke without fire.—(*He puts pouch in his pocket.*)

ETHEL—You don't believe in that old phrase?

DENBY—Not a bit . . . do you?

ETHEL—(*As she goes*)—No. Do make another break some time—wont' you, *Dick?*

DENBY—I probably will—unless Monty or you warn me?—(*Denby to R of stairs.*)

ETHEL—(*On first landing of stairs, leaning over balustrade*) I'll never do that—I'd rather like to see you put your foot in it—you seem so very sure of yourself—*Steve!*—(*She laughs and exits upstairs.*)

MONTY—Say, who is that girl?

DENBY—(*Looking after her*)—Why, Ethel Cartwright.

MONTY—Yes, yes, but what do you know about her?

DENBY—(*He crosses toward Monty down stage*)—Nothing, except that she's a corker.

MONTY—You met her in Paris, didn't you?

DENBY—Yes.

MONTY—What was she doing there?

DENBY—(*Turning and coming to him*)—What on earth are you driving at?

MONTY—She was behind that door, trying to listen to us.

DENBY—(*Quickly*)—You thought that, too?

MONTY—(*Triumphantly*)—Then you do suspect her of being the one they've got on the inside?

DENBY—It can't be possible—that girl—no, I won't believe it.

MONTY—(*Suddenly*)—Say, Steve, you're not sweet on her?

DENBY—(*Overdoing his denial*)—No, no, no, no, I know you're wrong—it's impossible.

MONTY—But you have the same idea I have.

DENBY—(*Slowly*)—I know, I know.—(*Reluctantly*)—She did seem mighty interested in my tobacco pouch.

MONTY—But how could she know the necklace was there?

DENBY—They've had a tip, and if she's one of 'em she'd know. Wouldn't it be just my rotten luck to have that girl—of all girls I've ever known—mixed up in this.

MONTY—I believe you're in love with her.—(*Takes a step or two to R.*)

DENBY—(*Looks toward stairs, speaks slowly*)—I know I am.

MONTY—(*Coming back to Denby*)—Oughtn't we to find out if she's the one who's after you or not?

DENBY—No, we oughtn't. I'm sure now. I won't insult her by trying to trap her.

MONTY—Flub-dub. I suspect her. Isn't it only fair to her to clear her of that suspicion—if she's all right, I'll be darned glad of it—if she isn't, wouldn't you rather know?

DENBY—But, old man, I don't want to fight her.

MONTY—I understand, but you can't quit now—you've got to go through.

DENBY—I suppose you're right.

MONTY—Of course I am.

DENBY—Understand, Monty, I'm only doing this to prove how absolutely wrong you are.

MONTY—Sure, Steve, sure.

DENBY—Go in there and keep the rest of the people from coming back.

MONTY—How can I do that?

DENBY—Oh, recite, make faces, do imitations, play going to Jerusalem—— (*Comes to left side of table, facing up stage.*)

MONTY—(*Going to door R, turns*)—And say, old man, whatever turns up, don't take it too hard. Just remember what happened to Sampson and Antony, and Adam.—(*Monty exits R. As soon as he has done so, Denby takes pouch and places it conspicuously on the floor, goes up and looks upstairs, pauses, changes his mind, and then returns and puts pouch on table, starts to hide behind French windows, stops, crosses L. Gets behind door at L, leaving it partially open so he can see out. He is visible to audience. After a second's pause, Ethel speaks, coming downstairs.*)

ETHEL—Oh, Mr. Denby, my fan was in my room—— (*She pauses as she sees he isn't there.*)

(*She looks around the room and sees the pouch. She starts for it, pauses, suspecting a trap, goes over to French window, looks out. Comes back, goes for pouch, then pauses and sees that door*

L is slightly ajar. She is now absolutely aware of his trap. She moves nervously; then, as she gets within range of the door, changes to a determined walk, and goes to bell over mantel and she rings for servant without ever looking at the door. Lambart enters R.)

ETHEL—Lambart, please find Mr. Denby and say that I am here.

LAMBART—Yes, madam.

ETHEL—(*Coming to table*)—Oh, here's Mr. Denby's tobacco—he must have forgotten it.—(*Lambart comes and picks up pouch.*)—No, I'll give it to him.

LAMBART—Yes, madam.—(*She pretends to try to take it from his hand and pulls it open. It falls to floor, scattering tobacco.*)

ETHEL—How careless of you, Lambart.—(*She looks keenly at spilt tobacco and sees no necklace has dropped from it.*)

LAMBART—I beg pardon, madam.—(*He picks up pouch.*)

ETHEL—Did you spill all the tobacco?

LAMBART—Yes, madam, the pouch is quite empty.—(*He hands it to her, she gives sigh of relief. He starts R.*)

ETHEL—(*Nodding her head to L door*)—No, I think Mr. Denby went to the library.

LAMBART—Yes, madam.—(*He goes to door; but Denby, realizing he must not be seen there, has gone. Lambart opens door*)—No, madam, Mr. Denby is not in the library.—(*Lambart exits L U.*)

ETHEL—(*Under her breath*)—Thank God!—(*Ethel first making sure that no one is watching or listening, goes quickly to French window and lowers the curtain as a signal. She stands breathlessly happy that there is no necklace. She has pouch in her hand. In a moment Taylor enters.*)

TAYLOR—Well, you've got him—where is he—where's the necklace?

ETHEL—You were wrong—there is no necklace.

TAYLOR—You're crazy.

ETHEL—You said it was in the tobacco pouch—I've searched—it isn't there.

TAYLOR—You're trying to protect him—you're stuck on him—you can't lie to me.

ETHEL—No, no, no. Look, here's the pouch. There's no necklace in it.

TAYLOR—How did you get hold of it?

ETHEL—He left it lying there on the table.

TAYLOR—He did, eh? Well, of course the necklace isn't in it. He suspects you. He's trying to bluff you.

ETHEL—No, no, he hasn't got it.

TAYLOR—I know he has and you've got to find out to-night where it is. You may have to search his room.

ETHEL—I couldn't. I couldn't.

TAYLOR—Yes, you could and you will. If you land him, use the same signal—pull down the shade in his room. We'll be watching; I can get in through the balcony.

ETHEL—I can't! I've done what you asked—I won't try to trap an innocent man.

TAYLOR—(*Snarling*)—Oh, you won't, eh? Well, you will. I've been pretty nice to you, but I'm sick of it. You'll go through for me and you'll go through right. I've had your sister followed—see, look at this—— (*He opens paper*)—It's a warrant for her arrest—unless you land that necklace to-night she'll be in the Tombs in the morning.

ETHEL—(*Covering her face*)—Oh, not that—not that—— (*Comes down a few steps.*)

TAYLOR—It's up to you.

ETHEL—(*Piteously*)—But what can I do—what can I do?

TAYLOR—I'll tell you what you can do. You're a good-looking girl; make use of your good looks; get around him, jolly him, get him stuck on you—make him take you into his confidence—he'll fall for you—those guys always do.

ETHEL—(*Bracing up*)—I know he's innocent—so—I—I will get around him; I will get his confidence. I'll prove it to you and I'll save him.

TAYLOR—Yes, but don't give him *your* confidence; don't give him the least tip off—understand? If you can get him out in the garden, I'll take a chance he has the necklace on him. We'll nail him there. And don't forget I've got that warrant.—(*He exits. She comes down to front of table, stands there, thinking.*)

DENBY—(*Entering from stairs, and going to R of table C*)—Oh, hello!

ETHEL—(*Bracing up*)—Oh, hello.—(*Ethel's note during this scene is: "I must get his confidence and prove his innocence."*)

DENBY—I am fortunate to find you alone.—(*Ethel comes in front of table, sits left of it.*)—You can't imagine how delightful it is to see you again.

ETHEL—(*Meaningly*)—No more delightful than for me to see you.

DENBY—Really! Curious, isn't it, that when you like people you may not see them for a year, but when you do, you begin just where you left off.

ETHEL—Where did we leave off?

DENBY—(*Embarrassed*)—Why—in Paris!

ETHEL—We are congenial, aren't we?

DENBY—(*Enthusiastically*)—Congenial! We're more than that—we're——

ETHEL—(*Quickly*)—And yet somehow you've changed a lot since Paris.

DENBY—For better or for worse?

ETHEL—For worse!

DENBY—(*Reproachfully*)—Oh, come now.

ETHEL—In Paris you used to trust me.

DENBY—And you think I don't, now?

ETHEL—I'm sure you don't.

DENBY—Why?

ETHEL—When I asked you why you were in America you put

me off with some playful excuse that you were just an idler. Tell me, didn't you come over on some important mission?

DENBY—(*Slowly, beginning to suspect her*)—And if I did, why do you want to know?

ETHEL—Shall we say, feminine curiosity.

DENBY—(*Seriously*)—I think not. You must have some more vital reason for asking than a mere whim..

ETHEL—(*Leaning forward*)—I have—I want us to be friends—good friends—I regard it as a test of friendship—why won't you tell me?

DENBY—Shall we say man's intuition? Oh, I know it's not supposed to be as good as woman's—but sometimes it's much more accurate.

ETHEL—So you won't trust me, after all?

DENBY—Can I?

ETHEL—Don't you think you can?

DENBY—(*Meaningly*)—If you do——

ETHEL—But aren't we friends—pledged that night under the moon in the Bois—you see I have memories of Paris, too.

DENBY—You put it as a test of friendship?

ETHEL—Yes.

DENBY—(*Suddenly, about to put her to the test*)—Then so do I. Miss Cartwright, you were right. I did not come to America idly. I came to smuggle a necklace through the customs. I did it to-day.—(*He rises.*)

ETHEL—(*Rising—horror stricken*)—You didn't—you didn't!

DENBY—I did.

ETHEL—(*Turning toward fire-place*)—Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

DENBY—(*Eyeing her keenly*)—But I fooled 'em.

ETHEL—(*Afraid for him*)—Oh, but perhaps you didn't——

DENBY—(*Crossing around table*)—What makes you think that?

ETHEL—(*Nervously*)—How can you be sure they didn't suspect?

DENBY—Here I am and there are no detectives after me. And if there were, they'd never guess I carry the necklace in my tobacco pouch.

ETHEL—(*Quickly*)—But your pouch was empty.

DENBY—(*Keenly*)—How did you know that?

ETHEL—(*Hastily*)—I—I—was here when Lambart spilt it.

DENBY—Oh, to be sure, but—I have another pouch.—(*Takes it from his pocket.*)

ETHEL—(*Aghast*)—Two pouches?

DENBY—One would have done. They never suspected me at all.

ETHEL—But you can't be certain. If they found out they'd put you in prison.

DENBY—Would you care?

ETHEL—Of course I would—aren't we friends?

DENBY—Are we?

ETHEL—(*Not looking at him*)—Of course, of course. . . . But what are you going to do?

DENBY—(*Straight to her*)—I've made my plans—I shan't be caught. If anyone is after me, I'll stop at nothing—I won't give in. No matter what it costs, or who it hurts—I've got to win.

ETHEL—(*Distressed and frightened*)—Oh!

DENBY—What is it?

ETHEL—(*Nervously*)—Oh, nothing. . . . Isn't it rather warm in here—won't you take me in the garden and show me the moon— (*Comes to back of table—not looking at moon*)—It's gorgeous.

DENBY—Surely. Come—— (*They start for French window, get half way there.*)

ETHEL—No, no, after all don't let's go.—(*Turning back to R of table.*)

DENBY—Why not?

ETHEL—(*Shaking*)—I don't know, but let's stay here. I'm just nervous.

DENBY—Nonsense. The moon will take your nerves away—he's very soothing, that old chap.—(*Pause; Ethel is R of table; he takes step to her*)—What is it? You're miles away.

ETHEL—(*Slowly*)—I'm thinking of my sister—come, let's go.—(*They start up toward French window.*)

DENBY—Surely, there are many things I can tell you—— (*Nora utters shrill scream off R. A slight pause and Monty rushes on through French window.*)

MONTY—(*Sharply*)—Look out, Steve, don't go out there!

DENBY—What's the matter?

ETHEL—(*Nervously*)—What—what is it?

MONTY—Nora and I went for a walk in the garden and suddenly two men jumped from behind the pagoda—— (*Denby gives Ethel a look. Frightened, she stares straight ahead at the audience.*)—They started for us and one man said: 'No, we're wrong,' and Nora screamed and they turned and ran like the very devil.—(*Nora, Alice and Michael enter R, talking excitedly, and they so play the following:*)

NORA—Wasn't it awful—has Monty told you?

ALICE—What's happened?

MICHAEL—Won't somebody explain?

NORA—Oh, it was perfectly frightful——

MONTY—Let me tell it——

NORA—You'll get it all wrong—I wasn't half as scared as you were.

MONTY—I was talking to Nora—and suddenly from the bushes——

NORA—Somebody stepped right out——

MICHAEL—Wait—wait—one at a time.

NORA—Why, you see Monty and I went for a walk in the garden——

MONTY—And two men jumped out and started for us——

MICHAEL—Great Scott!

ALICE—What did you do?

NORA—I screamed—and they ran away—wasn't it exciting—(*Taking a deep breath*)—just like a book.

ALICE—They might have killed you.

MICHAEL—You want a drink—I'll ring for some brandy.

MONTY—I'd be alright if I could get just one long, deep breath.—(*Michael, Alice and Nora go up to window.*)

DENBY—You do look a bit shaken, old man. What you need is a comforting smoke—there's a pipe in my suit case.

MONTY—But——

DENBY—Here's my tobacco.—(*Hands pouch to Monty*).

MONTY—Gee, I don't want that.

DENBY—(*Looking at Ethel*)—That's all right. I've smoked enough for to-night, anyhow. Only when you're through with it just drop it in the drawer of the desk in my room, so I'll have it for coffee in the morning.

MONTY—Sure, Steve, sure.

MONTY—(*Crosses up toward stairs*)—I'll leave the pouch in the drawer.—(*Exits upstairs.*)

ALICE—But suppose those men are robbers and try to break in here to-night?

DENBY—I'm sure they were only a couple of tramps.

ALICE—Oughtn't we to do something?

MICHAEL—(*Weakly*)—Do you want me to go look for them.

ALICE—Certainly not. I can imagine nothing more useless than a dead husband.

MICHAEL—I absolutely agree with you.

ALICE—Go telephone for the police.

MICHAEL—I'll do *that* with great pleasure.—(*He exits R.*)

NORA—(*Going toward stair*)—Goodness! I left my rings on my dressing table.

ALICE—Heavens! Let's get them—— (*She crosses toward stair. Nora runs upstairs and off*)—Ethel, you look frightened to death.

ETHEL—(*On fender seat*)—Oh, no, no.

ALICE—You needn't worry—after all, we've two men here—and Michael!—(*Alice exits upstairs.*)

DENBY—Now shall we look at the moon?

ETHEL—But those men out there——

DENBY—I'm sure they weren't after me. They wouldn't wait in the garden. And even if they are detectives, the necklace is safe now—come—— (*Moves to go.*)

ETHEL—No, no, I've nerves, I'm afraid. It's been rather an upsetting evening—I'd prefer to stay here.

MONTY—(*Comes downstairs nervously*)—I thought I'd rather be down here with you, Steve.

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—All right, old man. Did you leave the pouch in my desk?

MONTY—Yes. To make sure you'd find it in the morning I locked it up—here's the key.

DENBY—(*Taking key*)—Good!

ETHEL—(*Registering this talk of pouch*)—Good night, Mr. Denby.—(*Goes to stair.*)

DENBY—(*Following her to stair*)—You're not leaving?

ETHEL—Yes, I'm quite tired. I think I'll go to my room.—(*Going up the stairs.*)

MONTY—Oh, I guess everything's all right now.

DENBY—Let's hope so. Still the night isn't over yet. Pleasant dreams.

ETHEL—(*On stair, half way to top landing*)—I'm afraid they won't be quite—that!—(*Exits. Denby at bottom of stair looking after her.*)

MONTY—Say, Steve, she's gone now to get into your room.

DENBY—No, no, she hasn't.

MONTY—Why, she never made a move to leave till she knew I'd put the pouch in the drawer.

DENBY—I tell you you're wrong.

MONTY—I tell you I'm right—if she gets that necklace, it's all up with us.

DENBY—But she won't get it.

MONTY—What's going to stop her?

DENBY—The necklace isn't up there.

MONTY—What!—(*Denby draws the necklace from a false pocket under the right lapel of his coat. Relieved.*)—Gee, then everything's all right.

DENBY—But everything's all wrong——

MONTY—But, Steve—the necklace——

DENBY—Oh, damn the necklace!

MONTY—Steve, you're a fool.

DENBY—(*Slowly*)—I guess I am!

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

Act 3

SCENE.

The scene is Denby's room at the Harrington's. An attractive, daintily furnished guest chamber. There is an entrance door up left center; a door at left to another room; an alcove with a bed and appropriate furniture in it; a French window at right with a balcony off. A table desk at right center; a couch down left with a small table beside it. Other furnishings as necessary.

When the curtain rises the stage is in complete darkness, save for the moonlight, which streams through the window. There is a slight pause. A key is heard rattling in lock of door left. Ethel opens the door and runs cautiously across stage to the desk. She turns on lamp on desk. After a quick survey of desk she takes paper knife and tries to open drawer. She hears footsteps in hall; stops, listens, and runs up to center door and listens; runs back to desk and turns off lamp, and in doing so accidentally brushes paper knife on to floor. She runs off stage at door left.

After a slight pause Denby enters at door center with noisy assurance. He stops just inside the door and utters a stifled yawn as he switches on lights. He goes over to desk, looks out at window, then takes necklace from lapel and looks at it and puts it on the desk, then he goes to alcove and changes his evening coat for a dinner jacket. He comes out, takes cigarette from pocket and is in the act of lighting it when he spies paper knife on floor. He throws cigarette and match away and hurries to pick up knife, strikes match and examines drawer, then goes to door at left and stands listening. A knock is heard at center door. He hurriedly goes to desk, gets necklace, puts it in his pocket, comes back to couch, takes book from small table and sits on couch, reading.

DENBY—Who is it?

MONTY—(*Outside*)—Me.

DENBY—Come in, Monty.

MONTY—(*Enters C, comes down quickly to Denby, nervously*)—Is everything all right?

DENBY—(*Laughing*)—Yes, yes.

MONTY—Thank the Lord. That's the first time I've been able to swallow comfortably in an hour. I thought my heart was permanently dislocated.—(*Crosses to left of table R.*)

DENBY—What's happening downstairs?

MONTY—Nothing. And it's the limit to have nothing happen.

DENBY—Did you search the garden again?

MONTY—Yes, they haven't come back.

DENBY—That's queer—— You're sure?

MONTY—Lambart and I've been over the whole place—garden —shrubbery,—even the cornfield—not a trace of 'em.

DENBY—Well, they will be back——

MONTY—I'll bet they will—with the militia!

DENBY—Don't lose your nerve, Monty.

MONTY—I wish I would. This certainly is getting on it—and all the time I've got that creepy feeling that they're coming closer to us.

DENBY—But that's real sport, Monty.

MONTY—Sport be damned. You don't think the fox enjoys the hunt, do you? And, at that, he's got it on us. He knows who's chasing him.

DENBY—We'll find out to-night.

MONTY—Yes, when they shoot us full of holes.—(*Comes to front of table.*)

DENBY—You're not afraid?

MONTY—I'm scared to death. I thought I wanted excitement—but hereafter give me life on a farm.—(*Comes to window.*)

DENBY—You can always clear out—I'll understand.

MONTY—And leave you to face it alone—you ought to know me better than that, Steve. But oughtn't we to do something before they come back and search this room?

DENBY—Somebody's done that already.

MONTY—Who was it—the girl?

DENBY—I think not. Her room is in the other wing—— She'd hardly dare risk being seen over here till everybody's gone to bed.

MONTY—Then who could it have been?—(*There is sound of footsteps and cough in the hall.*)

DENBY—Sssh—— (*Knock at C door by Harrington.*)

MONTY—(*Dropping in chair L of table*)—Pinched!

DENBY—Come in.—(*Harrington, carrying two highballs, enters smilingly.*)

HARRINGTON—Hello, boys.

MONTY—(*Relieved*)—Oh, it's you—— (*He jumps up and crosses to window.*)

DENBY—Come in, Harrington.

MICHAEL—Brought up a couple of highballs—you said after dinner you might want a Scotch later.

DENBY—Thanks—I don't believe I do, after all.

MICHAEL—Good! Luck's with me.—(*He drains the entire glass with great satisfaction.*)—Ah-h. How about you, Monty?

MONTY—(*Laughing.*)—No, thanks.—(*Comes and sits on table.*)

MICHAEL—Splendid fellow. I'll take the encore in a minute. You know, now that my wife's home—she allows me one light one for dinner—mostly Vermouth—and one drink afterward—— 'Tain't fair.

MONTY—Aren't you master in your own house?

MICHAEL—You bet your life I'm not!

DENBY—In union there is strength. Have the other.

MICHAEL—I'm about to. Say, by the way, if you should change your mind and want a drink any time during the night, just ring for Lambart, he's used to it.

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—Thanks.

MICHAEL—I hope you will want one—I hate to think of Lambart's having a good night's rest for the first time in six weeks.—

(*He turns up*)—But, mind you don't get up half asleep and push that red thing over there.—(*He points to alarm on the wall by center door.*)

MONTY—What on earth is that? It looks like a hotel fire alarm: "Break the glass in case of fire."

MICHAEL—It's a burglar alarm that arouses the whole house.

MONTY—(*He rises*)—What!

DENBY—(*Laughing*)—In spite of our visitors of this evening, you don't really fear burglars?

MICHAEL—(*Sitting left of table R*)—I know it's funny, but I'm vice-president of the New York Burglar Insurance Company—and I've got to have one of all of their beastly patents in my house to show they're good.

DENBY—I'll keep away from it.

MICHAEL—The last guest who had this room accidentally knocked against it at four a. m. The blamed thing went off and Mrs. Harrington made me get up and search the whole house. At that I was glad it was a false alarm.—(*He takes up second highball and is drinking when voices are heard off stage*)—Good Lord, my wife! Here—quick—— (*Hands Monty empty glass, and Denby the half-filled one. Alice knocks on door C.*)—I count on you, boys—— (*Denby and Monty smile and nod.*)

DENBY—Come in.—(*Alice and Nora enter.*)

ALICE—Do we intrude?

DENBY—Rather no. Delightfully welcome.

NORA—We thought you'd still be up—Michael said he was bringing you some highballs.

MONTY—Great stuff, too—best whiskey I ever tasted.—(*Alice glances at Michael, who is innocently looking at the ceiling.*)

DENBY—Your husband is a noble abstainer with temptation right before him.

ALICE—Is he? How unusual—put temptation before Michael and he's just like old Adam—only Michael's weakness is for grapes, not apples.

NORA—Alice and I aren't the least sleepy—we thought perhaps one of you'd make a fourth at bridge.

DENBY—Among my other deficiencies I don't play.

ALICE—You, Monty?

MONTY—Surely.—(*Denby shakes his head at him—Monty continues awkwardly*)—That is if you don't mind waiting fifteen or twenty minutes. Steve and I are talking over a deal about—a—a gold mine.

ALICE—Are you interested in a mine?

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—Something like that.

ALICE—(*Eagerly*)—Is it going up?

MICHAEL—You never bought a share that did.

ALICE—I always follow your horrible example, my love.

NORA—(*Half turkey trotting*)—I'd rather dance than bridge it.—(*She hums "Get Out and Get Under" as she dances. Denby goes to small table head of couch L and places highball on it.*)

ALICE—Heavens, be quiet—you'll disturb Ethel.

DENBY—(*Quickly*)—Has Miss Cartwright gone to bed?—(*He goes down right.*)

ALICE—Yes, she felt rather tired.

NORA—(*Humming and dancing*)—It's wrong to go to bed so early. It can't be much after two.—(*Singing*)—Oh, this is the life.

ALICE—Hush, Nora—Ethel has the next room.—(*Denby at book-case L, drops cigarette in vase and turns quickly.*)

NORA—I thought you weren't using it this summer?

ALICE—Ethel insisted on it——

MICHAEL—And why the devil she was so persistent about it, I can't see.

ALICE—Oh, Michael, I told you those tramps scared her and she wanted to be down here near the men.—(*Denby goes and picks up Michael's highball from table.*)

MICHAEL—I know, I know, but why make me look through forty-seven bunches of keys to get one to fit that door?—(*Monty and Denby exchange glances*)—Seemed positively afraid of you, Denby; thought you were a tough customer.

ALICE—You're not drinking your highball, Mr. Denby.

DENBY—I'm saving it.

NORA—That's a hint; come on, Alice.—(*She goes to door, humming.*)

ALICE—Coming, Michael?

MICHAEL—In just a moment. I've got one more old wheeze I want to spring on Denby—he's a great audience for old ones.—(*Nora exits.*)

ALICE—When you've told it you come directly downstairs and play bridge.

MICHAEL—Certainly, my dear.

ALICE—And, Michael—don't think you've fooled me.

MICHAEL—(*Innocently*)—Fooled you? Why I'd never dream of even trying to.

ALICE—(*Goes over and takes highball from Denby's hand and returning, hands it to Michael*)—Here's the rest of your drink.—(*She exits; Michael drinks and goes up to door.*)

MICHAEL—My wife's a damned clever woman.—(*He obediently trots out.*)

DENBY—(*Quickly goes to door to make sure Michael has gone—then turns to Monty*)—By George, it was that girl.

MONTY—Are you sure?

DENBY—(*Coming down center*)—She tried to pry open that drawer with this paper knife. You can see the marks. I found the knife on the floor where she dropped it, when she heard me coming down the hall and hurried back to her own room.

MONTY—Gee! That's pretty tough, old man.

DENBY—It's hard to believe she's the sort of woman who'd try to take advantage of my friendship to turn me over to the police, but that's just what she tried to do.

MONTY—I'm sorry, old man—mighty sorry.

DENBY—But I don't want to fight her.—(*Goes to window.*)

MONTY—(*Coming to left of desk*)—What are you going to do?

DENBY—(*Right of desk—turning to Monty*)—If she'll tell me

who it is that sent her here—the man who's after me—I'll fight him and leave her out of it, but if she won't I'll play her own game—only this time she follows my rules.—(*Both suddenly start and then turn toward door left.*)

MONTY—(*In a whisper*)—What's that?

DENBY—Sssh—— (*He tiptoes to door left and listens.*)

MONTY—Is she there?

DENBY—(*Nods.*)

MONTY—Has she heard us?

DENBY—(*Coming center*)—No. I heard her close the window and then she came over to the door.—(*He crosses to desk.*)

MONTY—What are you doing?

DENBY—(*Writes and hands paper to Monty*)—Here's my plan—read it.—(*As Monty reads, Denby goes up to door C, reaches out in hall and turns off light switch, leaving hall in darkness. He comes back as Monty looks up from paper.*)

MONTY—(*In whisper—reading*)—Jumping Jupiter!

DENBY—(*Low*)—Do you understand?

MONTY—Perfectly.

DENBY—(*Goes over near Ethel's door; speaks loudly for her benefit*)—It's a pity Miss Cartwright's gone to bed; I might have risked trying to learn bridge if she'd been a player. She's a bully girl.

MONTY—Don't talk so loud—in these dictagraph days the walls have ears. We can't tell who may be listening. Let's go out on the lawn, where we're surely safe.

DENBY—Good idea.—(*They leave Ethel's door and go to C door, beside which is light switch. Denby switches out light as he speaks loudly*)—Well, Monty—— What's your scheme?

(*The door closes, the room is in darkness. Audience thinks Denby has left room, but he hasn't. Monty's voice is heard as he goes down the hall. His voice and footsteps fade away. There is silence for five seconds, then the sound of a key turning the lock of Ethel's door. Ethel enters, she hurries to desk, and gives one pull at drawer. The lights go up. Ethel gives exclamation and turns. Denby is standing inside door center.*)

DENBY—(*Coming down center*)—So, you've come for the necklace—why do you want it?

ETHEL—(*Taking a step or two,* C)—I am employed by the government—I was sent here to get it.

DENBY—What?—the charming Miss Cartwright a secret service agent—it's quite incredible.

ETHEL—But it's true.

DENBY—Who employed you?

ETHEL—I can't tell you——

DENBY—Then I must refuse to believe you.

ETHEL—But it's the truth.

DENBY—Was it John H. Bangs of the secret service who engaged you——

ETHEL—Yes—yes——

DENBY—(*Bitingly*)—You lie, Miss Cartwright, you lie——

ETHEL—Mr. Denby!

DENBY—I've no time for politeness now—— There is no Bangs in the secret service.

ETHEL—How do you know?

DENBY—It's my business to know my—opponents.

ETHEL—I can't tell you who it was, but if you'll just give me the necklace——

DENBY—And if I refuse, you'll call those men out there and have me arrested?

ETHEL—I don't know—what else can I do? *I can't fail.*

DENBY—Nor can I. Do you know what this means to me?—prison—gray walls—and iron bars—solitude—to be caged like some beast. Do you know what that means?—I do—I've seen it—I've feared it—I've gone sick at the thought of it. No, Miss Cartwright, you are not going to send me to prison.

ETHEL—But I don't want to. I don't want to do that to any man——

DENBY—(*Quickly—coming near to her*)—Then there is a way out of it for both of us.

ETHEL—(*Eagerly*)—What?

DENBY—Tell them you've failed—that you couldn't find the necklace—and I'll give you ten thousand dollars.

ETHEL—No—no——

DENBY—Twenty thousand—no one but you and me would know——

ETHEL—No——

DENBY—Twenty thousand's all I can afford.

ETHEL—I can't accept. I've *got* to get that necklace—— It means more than any money to me.

DENBY—Ah, they have some hold on you.

ETHEL—No—no——

DENBY—Then why should you be in the secret service, unless it's for money or you've been forced into it?

ETHEL—I can't explain—what difference does it make to you who sent me here?

DENBY—Because I don't want to fight a woman—any woman—I'll fight the man behind you—I'll beat him—will you tell me who he is?

ETHEL—No.

DENBY—You're going to make me fight you?

ETHEL—I've got to fight——

DENBY—Very well—— (*Going to door L, he opens it and locks it, putting key in his pocket.*)

ETHEL—What do you mean?

DENBY—I'm going to keep you here.

ETHEL—(*She tries to open hall door but it is locked.*)

DENBY—I feared we might be interrupted——

ETHEL—(*Turning to him*)—Open that door——

DENBY—You don't leave until I am ready to let you go.

ETHEL—You wouldn't do that——

DENBY—I regret the necessity of using such methods—to you of all people—but you leave me no choice——

ETHEL—But I don't understand——

DENBY—(*Coming to her as she shrinkingly backs away*)—Only—that you are a beautiful woman and I am a man—— It's nearly three—you are in my room after asking that your apartment adjoin mine—your insistence that a key be found, is only incriminating—you are frankly en negligee and very charming. Inevitably you must be found here—I'm afraid there can be only *one* construction put upon it.

ETHEL—(*With bitter contempt*)—I thought at least *you* were a *man*.—(*She is in front of desk.*)

DENBY—(*At center*)—I am—and you are a woman—that's the point. . . .

ETHEL—I thought you were my friend.

DENBY—You dare talk of friendship! You knew I liked you—liked you very much, and because you knew it you tried to wheedle me into betraying myself. You smiled and lied, and pledged our friendship, until I'd told you the truth—and all the time you were only trying to trap me—hunt me down—send me to prison.

ETHEL—I wasn't—I wasn't——

DENBY—And when I'd told you the truth, you asked me to go in the garden, knowing that those men out there were waiting for me——

ETHEL—I couldn't help it.

DENBY—When you thought I was sending the necklace here you trumped up a flimsy excuse to leave so you might sneak in here to get it—is that friendship?

ETHEL—I wasn't trying to trap you—I thought you were innocent—I wanted to make sure so I could convince them.

DENBY—Yes, you proved that. When you found out I was guilty you still tried to save me, I suppose, by asking me to walk into their trap?

ETHEL—(*Trying to defend herself*)—After all, you had broken the law—you were guilty——

DENBY—(*Comes to her*)—If you'd only played fair—but you didn't—you used a woman's last weapon—her sex. Well, I can play your game, too—I can use your methods—and I will. You stay here until morning.

ETHEL—(*Frightened*)—You don't dare——

DENBY—(*Easily*)—Oh, yes I do.

ETHEL—(*After a pause—with bravado*)—And you think the possible loss of my reputation is going to frighten me into letting you go?

DENBY—(*Sharply*)—I do.

ETHEL—(*At B of desk*)—Well, you're wrong. I have only to tell them the truth about the necklace and what I'm doing here——

DENBY—But the truth is so seldom believed—especially when there is no evidence to support it.

ETHEL—All the evidence I need is there in that locked drawer.

DENBY—Quite so. I'd forgotten—(*He goes around to back of desk*)—only it's not in the drawer!—(*He takes it from his pocket and shows it*)—It's a beauty, isn't it?—(*He writes quickly.*)

ETHEL—(*At center*)—What are you doing?

DENBY—Manufacturing evidence.

ETHEL—Meanwhile I propose to leave this room.

DENBY—(*Looking up*)—How, may I ask?

ETHEL—If you believe you've frightened me, you're quite wrong.—(*She moves toward bell on wall left of center door.*)

DENBY—And what are you going to do?

ETHEL—(*Pushes bell violently*)—I've rung for the servants! —(*Triumphantly*)—Now, Mr. Denby.

DENBY—What a pity you did that—you'll regret it so very soon.—(*He goes to window.*)

ETHEL—Oh, shall I? When the servants come I shall send for Mr. and Mrs. Harrington and tell them exactly who you are —and I shall take that necklace from the room with me.

(*Denby comes to window. Whistle off stage.*)

DENBY—(*Throws necklace wrapped in note he has just written out at window*)—But you see the necklace won't be here.

ETHEL—(*Runs down by desk, as if almost to stop him, but the necklace is gone. She stops.*)—I shall tell them it's on the lawn where you just threw it.

DENBY—Wrong again. If you'll stand here, you may see that my friend Monty was waiting below—he has it.

ETHEL—But your friend Monty can't get away from those men out there.

DENBY—Perhaps you heard a whistle. That was Monty's signal telling me the coast was clear. For the moment your friends of the secret service have gone.

ETHEL—But I'll tell the Harringtons about Monty, too; that he's your accomplice.

DENBY—And who would believe Monty Vaughan, of the Washington Vaughans, the accomplice of a smuggler?

ETHEL—(*Beaten*)—Oh!—(*Goes back to center.*)

DENBY—(*Coming to her*)—You see? And since you've forced me I've had to play my last card, and a very low one I'm sorry to say. That note I wrote that I threw to Monty he'll leave on the floor of the living room—it was a note to you.

ETHEL—(*Amazed*)—To me?

DENBY—It contained the suggestion that you try to get the room next mine—that you come to me here to-night—it was the invitation—of a lover!

ETHEL—(*Flaming*)—You beast! You coward!

DENBY—It's certain to be found where you apparently dropped it—it's evidence is conclusive. They all know we are not new friends. If you are still in this room in the morning—as you will be—what other explanation can you offer?—(*She doesn't answer*) —I think the episode of the necklace remains as between just you and me.

ETHEL—(*By head of couch*)—You—cad!

DENBY—The servants seem to be sleeping soundly—I fear they are not coming.

ETHEL—But they will! They will!

DENBY—(*Coming to her*)—If they don't, may I suggest that you ring that burglar alarm—it will serve your purpose even better

—it will wake up everybody.—(*He speaks urgingly. She faces front; he is close beside her*)—Why don't you ring it? I dare you!—(*Knock on door C. She shudders. He whispers to her*) Well, why don't you answer?

ETHEL—(*Under her breath*)—No, no, I can't—— (*She shrinks.*)

DENBY—Ah!—(*Goes to door center—aloud*)—Who is it?

LAMBART—(*Off stage*)—You rang, sir?

DENBY—Yes, I forgot to tell you that Miss Cartwright wishes to be called at seven.

LAMBART—Very good. Anything else, sir?

DENBY—Call me at the same time, that's all. Good night.

LAMBART—Good night, sir.—(*He is heard departing down the hall—Denby listening at door.*)

DENBY—(*Mockingly; he comes down to her*)—So you didn't dare denounce me, after all?

ETHEL—(*Trying to laugh*)—Oh, I knew it was all a joke—that you couldn't be so contemptible.

DENBY—(*Grimly*)—A joke, eh?

ETHEL—Yes; if you'd meant what you said you'd have called in Lambart just then. That would have answered your purpose—I knew you wouldn't—that you couldn't.

DENBY—I'm not ready yet.

ETHEL—(*Hardly daring to believe him*)—You really mean to keep me here?

DENBY—I've no other course.

ETHEL—But you can't do it.—(*Clock off stage strikes three. Denby looks at watch and crosses to back of desk.*)

DENBY—(*Serenely*)—It's four hours till the maid goes to call you and finds the room empty, so meanwhile—won't you sit down, Miss Cartwright?

ETHEL—(*Crosses to desk, and sits chair L; after a moment speaks hysterically.*)—Oh, I can't face it—I can't—I learned that just now—the disgrace—the humiliation—I can't face it!

DENBY—(*Grimly*)—You've got to face it.

ETHEL—I tell you I can't—it's unfair—it's horrible—if you'll just let me go I'll promise I won't betray you.

DENBY—You don't dare keep silent about me—how can I let you go?

ETHEL—I'm telling you the truth.

DENBY—Then tell me who sent you here. If you don't it means prison for me and dishonor for you—if you do, it means your safety—perhaps mine—now choose.

ETHEL—I can't—I can't—oh, please, please——

DENBY—(*Crosses to her and grasps her in his arms*)—By God, I'll make you tell——

ETHEL—Don't touch me—let me go—don't—don't——

DENBY—Who sent you here?

ETHEL—I'm afraid. I'm afraid. I hate you; I hate you! Let me go—let me go—don't——

DENBY—(*Holding her*)—Who sent you here?

ETHEL—Oh, I'll tell. Oh, I'll tell.—(*Backing away from him*

as he releases her. She sinks into chair—pathetic—broken)—I can't go through with it—you've beaten me—— Oh, I've tried so hard, so hard, but you've won. I can't go on—oh, it's too unfair when it's not my fault—it's not—— Oh, you don't understand—you can't—or you wouldn't spoil my whole life like this—you wouldn't! It is not only me—it's my mother—my sister—Amy—— (*She pauses. Looks up.*)—Amy!!—(*She rises*)—No, I won't quit—no matter what happens to me—I'll expose you—I'll tell them everything—I'll let them decide between us—whether they'll believe you or me—it's you or my sister—I'll save her.

DENBY—(*Amazed*)—Your sister?

ETHEL—They shan't send her to prison.

DENBY—(*Hoping against hope*)—You're doing all this to keep your sister from prison?

ETHEL—Yes, yes, I love her—they shan't take her.

DENBY—Then you haven't done it because you wanted to?

ETHEL—No, no—what else could I do—she's my sister—she comes first.

DENBY—Then you weren't just lying to me—trying to trick me for money?

ETHEL—No, no. Don't you see I wanted to save you, too—I wanted you to get away—I told them you were innocent—but they wouldn't believe me—they said I had to go on—if I didn't they'd send Amy to prison. That's why I'm here—— (*Pathetically*)—Oh, let me go—let me go!

DENBY—(*Coming over and looking her square in the eyes*)—Are you telling me the truth?

ETHEL—Oh, yes—yes, can't you see I am—please—please believe me.

DENBY—(*Still looking straight in her eyes—after a moment he is convinced*)—It may spoil everything I've built on, but I've got to take the chance—(*Goes to door and unlocks it*)—You can go, Miss Cartwright.

ETHEL—(*Coming to him*)—Oh, you are a man, after all.—(*Police whistle off R. They both pause, staring front.*)

DENBY—(*Hurriedly crosses to window R, and half hiding behind curtain, looks out*)—The devil!

ETHEL—What is it?

DENBY—Your friends of the secret service have come back—they mustn't see us together—(*He lowers shade on window R.*)

ETHEL—(*With a scream*)—Oh, my God, what have you done? That was the signal that I had trapped you—that was the signal to bring Taylor here——

DENBY—(*Triumphantly*)—Ah, then it's Taylor who's after me?—(*He comes back to her.*)

ETHEL—(*Frightened at having told*)—Oh, I didn't mean to tell—I didn't—I didn't.

DENBY—Now it'll be a fight to a finish!

ETHEL—Go, go, before he comes!

DENBY—And leave you to face him alone?—(*A pause—he bends his head, and touches his lips to her hand*)—No. . . . I love you.

ETHEL—Please, please—while there's time—he mustn't take you—he mustn't—— *Oh, I couldn't bear that—I couldn't!*

DENBY—(*Realizing*)—Ethel?

ETHEL—(*In his arms, tenderly*)—I love you—— Oh, my dear—I love you.

DENBY—(*Triumphantly*)—I can fight the whole world now, and win.

ETHEL—No, no, for my sake go—let me see him first—let me try to get you out of it.

DENBY—No, I stay here. When he comes, say that you've caught me.

ETHEL—No, no, I can't send you to prison, either.

DENBY—I won't go to prison. I'm not done for yet, but we've got to save your sister. Taylor mustn't think you've failed him; do you understand?

ETHEL—But then he'll take you away——

DENBY—Do as I say; tell him the necklace is here somewhere.

ETHEL—No, no——

DENBY—It's for your sister. We're going to save her.—(*Sound of Taylor's approach off stage.*)—He's coming—— (*Denby starts to door C.*)

TAYLOR—(*Coming in at the window with revolver in hand*)—Hands up, Denby!—(*Denby's hands go up*)—Well, congratulations, Miss Cartwright—you landed him—I thought you would.

DENBY—What's the meaning of this? Who are you?

TAYLOR—Oh, can that bunk—— (*To Ethel*)—Where's the necklace?

ETHEL—I don't know.

TAYLOR—You don't know?

ETHEL—I haven't been able to find it, but it's here somewhere.

TAYLOR—He's probably got it on him.

DENBY—All this is preposterous.

TAYLOR—Hand it over.

DENBY—I have no necklace.

TAYLOR—I'll have to search you.—(*Comes to Denby, gun in hand, and searches him.*)

DEBNY—I'll make you pay for this.

TAYLOR—Will you give it to me—or have I got to search this place?

DENBY—Oh, well, if you'll let me take my hands down I'll get it for you.

TAYLOR—Well, you haven't got a gun on you—take 'em down.

DENBY—It's right here—(*He grabs match safe off of bookcase and smashes burglar alarm—and switches off lights. Stage is entirely dark.*)

(*Taylor utters an ejaculation; there is the steady murmur of a deep gong off stage; they struggle in the dark. Ethel goes up to light switch R of C door. The revolver is fired in the struggle. Ethel screams. Ringing of burglar alarm ceases.*)

DENBY—Turn on the lights.—(*Ethel switches on lights and*

comes down to couch. Denby is seen in possession of revolver, just thrusting Taylor away from him.)

TAYLOR—Damn you!

DENBY—(*To Taylor*)—Sit down! Sit down!—(*Taylor sits chair L of desk. Knocking and clamor of voices at door C. Denby keeping Taylor covered, backs up to door, fishing in his pocket for key, reaches behind him and unlocks and opens it. Michael, Alice and Lambart enter.*)

MICHAEL—What's the matter?
ALICE—Good Heavens, what's happened? (TOGETHER)

DENBY—That man tried to break in here—he's a burglar—I caught him.

MICHAEL—Good Lord!
ALICE—How splendid of you. (TOGETHER)

(*Michael and Alice are left of Denby, who as they entered came down center. Lambart has gone behind desk.*)

TAYLOR—The man's crazy—don't believe him—*he's* a crook. I'm an agent of the United States Customs—I came here to get Denby——

DENBY—That's a pretty poor bluff. This is one of the men who were in the garden to-night.

ALICE—I told you they'd break in.

MICHAEL—Good work, Denby.

TAYLOR—I tell you I came to arrest him.

ALICE—Arrest that charming man? Why that's absurd.

TAYLOR—Absurd, eh? You won't think so when you learn who I am. That girl can tell you.

ALICE—Ethel can tell us?—(*They all turn to look at her.*)

ETHEL—(*Facing front, after a second*)—I never saw the man before.

TAYLOR—You didn't, eh? I guess you'll remember me when I serve a warrant for your sister's arrest. I've got it in my pocket and papers proving that I'm working for the United States Government.—(*He reaches hand toward inside coat pocket to get them. Ethel sits on couch.*)

DENBY—(*Poking gun under his nose*)—No, you don't!—(*Denby moves his hand toward Taylor's pocket to get them.*)

TAYLOR—(*Snarling*)—Here, don't you touch 'em!

DENBY—(*Smoothly*)—Certainly not—Mr. Harrington will get them.—(*Michael crosses to Taylor and feels for papers.*)

TAYLOR—(*Holding coat open*)—In there.—(*Harrington takes papers from Taylor's pocket, starts to look at them.*)

DENBY—(*Grabbing papers from Harrington's hand*)—Keep out of range, Harrington.—(*He backs to door C, hastily glancing at papers*)—It's alright, Miss Cartwright—it's alright.—(*Exits door C.*)

TAYLOR—Grab him, I tell you! He's a crook (*ad lib*).—(*He blows whistle*).—Don't let him get away.—(*He runs off C. Michael, Alice and Lambart after him, screaming, down hall. Ethel goes up to door C and looks anxiously down hall. Denby having fooled*

them and disappeared, runs on from door left, locks it and motions Ethel to follow others. Ethel exits center as the voices and whistle keep up off stage as

The CURTAIN Falls.

(*Picture: Denby, gun in hand, at door C, slightly open, looking off. Pandemonium reigns in hallway.*)

Act 4

The scene is the same as that of Act. II. The action is supposed to begin five minutes before the conclusion of Act III.

When the curtain rises, Alice, Nora and Michael are discovered playing bridge. Michael is fast asleep. Alice is counting on score sheet. They sit as follows: Michael at back of table, Alice at right of it, Nora down in front of it.

ALICE—(*Looking up*)—What on earth is keeping Monty?

NORA—Oh, I don't know.

ALICE—He must have an awful headache to stay out in the garden all this time.

NORA—Goodness, he's been gone twenty minutes.—(*Rising and going to windows.*)

ALICE—And look at Michael, fast asleep——

NORA—It's those highballs he just had upstairs in Mr. Denby's room.

ALICE—I told you they always made him sleepy. Michael!

NORA—(*Coming back to R of Alice*)—Before you wake him, do tell me what happened in Jane's divorce case——

ALICE—Although the judge was a man—she won it.

NORA—I wonder why she married *him.*

ALICE—My dear, don't go into that. Why anybody ever marries anybody is never apparent to anybody else.

NORA—Marriage *is* funny.—(*Monty's whistle heard off stage.*)

ALICE—If there weren't so many awful things against it, I'd be tremendously in favor of trial marriage.

NORA—Wouldn't it be wonderful—I get so bored going around with one man.

ALICE—That's the difficulty—so does every other woman.

NORA—Still I do like Monty—but he's such a coward about proposing.

ALICE—Why don't you make him?

NORA—Oh, I will—yet.

MONTY—(*Entering from garden, nervously stuffing into his breast pocket the package containing the necklace that Denby threw him from the window in Act Three*)—Hello, hope I haven't delayed the game too long.

NORA—We never missed you.

ALICE—How's your headache?

MONTY—My headache? What headache?—(*Remembering*)—Oh, it's all gone. Well, shall we play?—(*He picks up cards as he sits.*)

NORA—Yes—let's—Michael dealt before he went to sleep.

ALICE—(*Tapping Michael*)—Michael! you're not at the opera—you're playing cards.

MICHAEL—(*After a pause—drowsily*)—Who opened it?

ALICE—We're playing bridge, dear—bridge—bridge—— (*The clock strikes three. In Act III, five minutes before the curtain, a clock also struck the same hour.*)

NORA—I make it no trumps.

ALICE—It isn't your bid. What do you say, Michael?

MICHAEL—What'd the dealer draw?

ALICE—We're not playing poker.

MICHAEL—Oh, yes, sure, what's trumps?

ALICE—Oh, stop it! It's your bid.

MICHAEL—I go one spade.

MONTY—One—no trump.

NORA—Two lillies——

ALICE—Pass.

MICHAEL—Give me three cards.

ALICE—Michael, if you're so sleepy, you'd better go to bed. . . .

MICHAEL—I never broke up a poker game in my life. It's only the shank of the evening—— (*To Nora*)—What's happened, partner?

NORA—I went two lillies.

MICHAEL—(*Looking at his hand*)—Three aces—I'd like to open it for two dollars—as it is, I pass.

MONTY—Two no trump.

NORA—Pass.

ALICE—Pass.

MICHAEL—It's by me.

MONTY—Your lead, Nora.—(*Alice lays down dummy, then Nora plays—then Monty plays from dummy.*)

MICHAEL—(*Playing*)—There——

NORA—What did you play that for?

MICHAEL—(*Withdrawing card*)—I do beg your pardon. What's trumps?

ALICE—No trumps!!

MICHAEL—Well, I haven't got one.—(*He plays another card.*)

NORA—Oh, Michael, can't you see the king is in the dummy?

MICHAEL—Well, why put it there. This game makes me sick. Nothing but reproaches——

NORA—I wish Mr. Denby were playing, instead of poor Michael.

MONTY—Steve's got the right idea; he's in bed, asleep.

MICHAEL—Great man, Denby—he knows you can't sit up all night unless you drink.

ALICE—Oh, let's play one more rubber and stop. Remember, Michael, it's not poker.

MICHAEL—I wish it were—no partners—no reproaches in poker—if you make a fool of yourself you lose your own money and everybody else is glad of it.

ALICE—After this one round of jacks then, to please Michael?

MONTY—And then quit.

MICHAEL—I'm for that.—(*Yawning*)—But don't think it's because I'm sleepy. I'm not. I'm thirsty.—(*The burglar alarm rings. All rise, amazed; look at each other and then upstairs.*)—Burglars!

NORA—Good heavens!

ALICE—What'll we do?

MONTY—Nonsense—the alarm's probably gone off by accident.—(*Sound of shot off stage.*)

ALICE—Somebody's killed.— . . . (*Crossing to R.*)

NORA—(*Crossing to Alice R. C.*)—Isn't it awful?—(*Monty has gone to left of table.*)

MICHAEL—(*In front of table*)—Go on, Monty, find out what's the matter.—(*Monty turns away to fender with scared expression. Sound of alarm stops.*)

ALICE—(*Crossing to Michael*)—You go, Michael. Are you afraid?

MICHAEL—Certainly not—but of course the beggar's armed.

LAMBART—(*Entering*)—The burglar alarm, sir! The indicator shows it's Mr. Denby's room.

MICHAEL—Good old Lambart. Go ahead—we'll follow . . .

LAMBART—I brought a revolver for you, sir.—(*Proffers pistol; Alice and Nora shriek and back away.*)

MICHAEL—Keep it, keep it—you may need it yourself.—(*Lambart starts, followed by Michael; as Michael gets to stairs, Alice crosses to him.*)

ALICE—Mikey!—(*He stops; she is at his left*)—If you're going to be killed, I want to be killed, too.—(*The three exit upstairs.*)

NORA—(*Center; blankly*)—I don't want to be killed——

MONTY—(*Crossing to L of her*)—Neither do I. Great Scott! I wish I'd never gone into this.

NORA—Gone into what?

MONTY—(*Teeth almost chattering*)—Nora, I may get shot any minute.

NORA—What??

MONTY—This may be my last five minutes on earth.

NORA—Monty, what have you done?—(*Then ecstatically*)—murder?

MONTY—If I come out of this alive—will you marry me?

NORA—Oh, Monty—(*She goes into his arms*)—why didn't you ask me last year?

MONTY—I didn't need to be protected then, and, anyhow, it takes a crisis like this to make me say what I really feel.

NORA—I love you, anyway.

MONTY—Gee, if I don't get shot, I'm the happiest man in the world.

NORA—(*Backs away from him and taps the package in his breast pocket*)—What on earth have you got in your pocket?

MONTY—That's my heart.

NORA—On that side?

MONTY—Oh, that? I'd almost forgotten—it belongs to Steve. (*There is a sound of a police whistle off R.*)

MONTY—The police!!

NORA—Don't let them arrest you!!

MONTY—Here, quick, hide behind this door.—(*They exit R, talking ad lib. Duncan and Gibbs enter R U.*)

DUNCAN—(*Hastily surveys room and crosses to stairs.*)—Come on, Harry. He's upstairs.

GIBBS—The chief's got him, sure.—(*They exit upstairs. Monty and Nora come on R.*)

MONTY—This is awful. Nora, in case of trouble you'd better go into the next room.

NORA—What are you going to do?

MONTY—I'll just wait for Steve—please go. . . .

NORA—I'm not afraid.

MONTY—But I am.

NORA—What?

MONTY—For you, for you. I'll come for you as soon as the trouble's over.

NORA—I hate to miss anything.

MONTY—I'd rather face 'em alone.

NORA—Well—(*She starts to go*)—Don't get shot, Monty, dear.

MONTY—(*Kissing her*)—Believe me, I'll try not to——

(*She exits. Monty attempts to hide necklace first over R on mantel, then under pillow on couch at left. He gives up in disgust as he can't find a satisfactory place; sees bottle on table up C, pours drink and is in act of drinking it when voices are heard off L U. He puts drink down and exits with annoyance. Duncan, Gibbs, Taylor, Michael, Alice come trooping downstairs, followed by Ethel, a silent, nervous figure, she goes down L; Gibbs and Duncan go to windows; Taylor at center; Michael and Alice up center back of table.*)

TAYLOR—Ford and Hammett are outside?

DUNCAN—Yes, sir.

TAYLOR—It's moonlight—Denby can't have gotten away—they'd have seen him.

GIBBS—Maybe he's somewhere in the bushes.

TAYLOR—Get out and search there—both of you—I'll whistle if I need you.—(*Gibbs and Duncan exit through French window.*)

MICHAEL—(*Coming to Taylor; nervously*)—I want to beg your pardon, Mr. Taylor—it was a very natural mistake to think you were a burglar.

TAYLOR—I suppose so—lucky for me I had my men here to prove my identity.

MICHAEL—(*Nervously*)—Surely, surely.

ALICE—We had no idea Mr. Denby was a smuggler. . . .

TAYLOR—No, of course, you hadn't.

MICHAEL—He seemed a mighty nice chap.

ALICE—But I always did say he might be a murderer.

MONTY—(*Coming in from library, airily*)—Hello, did you get the burglar?

ALICE—Why, you see, there wasn't any burglar.

MICHAEL—It's your friend who caused all the trouble. . . .

TAYLOR—Don't explain.—(*To Monty*)—Have you seen Steven Denby in the last ten minutes?—(*Nora tiptoes in and stands by Door R, listening.*)

MONTY—(*Cooly*)—No, isn't he in bed?

TAYLOR—No! You know he isn't—maybe you're his pal—in on the job with him—come here—— (*Monty crosses to him.*)

ALICE—Why, that's too absurd—I've known Monty for years.

MONTY—Who is this man?

TAYLOR—Never mind who I am.—(*Starts to search Monty.*)

NORA—(*Rushing to Monty and taking him in her arms.*)—Don't hurt him!

MONTY—It's alright, Nora.—(*Taylor is searching him; he finishes and finds nothing; Monty continues with bravado*)—My room's three doors down from the landing; if you want to search there——

TAYLOR—That'll be enough from you. I guess you're not smart enough to be Denby's pal—clear out!—(*Nora makes a face at Taylor.*)

MICHAEL—Do you want us any longer?

TAYLOR—No, leave me alone to talk with this girl—(*Indicating Ethel.*)

ALICE—But——

MICHAEL—Please keep her out of it. I'm quite sure she's absolutely innocent in the matter.

TAYLOR—Are you? Well, I'd like to talk with her alone.

ETHEL—It's all right. There's just some misunderstanding; please go.

MICHAEL—You really want us to——

ETHEL—Yes—yes—— (*Lambart enters downstrais right, coming to Michael.*)

MICHAEL—Come, Alice—(*As they go*)—I really need a drink.

ALICE—My dear, under these circumstances you may have an all-night license.—(*Lambart moves toward Michael.*)

LAMBART—Beg pardon, Mr. Harrington, can I speak to you privately?

MICHAEL—(*He stops; Alice goes and waits by door R*)—What is it?—(*Lambart whispers to him*)—What!!

TAYLOR—Say, what is all this?

MICHAEL—A long distance from my partner—mighty important—excuse me. Alice—I'll use the upstairs 'phone.—(*He hurries upstairs. Lambert exits.*)

MONTY—Do you want me any longer?

TAYLOR—I told you to get out.

MONTY—With pleasure. Come, Nora.—(*Nora and Monty go with Alice.*)

NORA—Oh, you are perfectly splendid—I had no idea you could be so brave.

MONTY—Neither had I!

ALICE—Don't you think we all need some champagne? I do.

MONTY—Sure. But on a night like this, what's a quart among three?—(*They all three exit.*)

TAYLOR—(*Turning to Ethel vindictively*)—What did you mean by telling them upstairs you'd never seen me before?

ETHEL—(*Beside the table*)—You said under no circumstances must I mention your name.

TAYLOR—(*Center—discomfitted*)—Yes, but——

ETHEL—That it was imperative your identity should not be disclosed, didn't you?

TAYLOR—I suppose that's true—but when you saw me wanting to prove who I was——

ETHEL—I didn't understand. I was afraid to do anything but follow your instructions.

TAYLOR—Um—how did you find Denby had the necklace?

ETHEL—I got into his room and caught him—he had it in his hand.

TAYLOR—Yes, yes——

ETHEL—Then he suddenly turned out the lights and in the dark he hid it—I couldn't see where.

TAYLOR—Do you realize what all this means to you—to your sister if you're lying?

ETHEL—Oh, yes—yes—that's why you can believe me.

DUNCAN—(*Coming hurriedly through French window*)—Say, Chief, Denby's back in his room.—(*Ethel gasps.*)—(*Taylor turns a step away from table.*)

TAYLOR—What!—How do you know?

DUNCAN—Gibbs got up on to the roof of the pagoda—he can see into the room from there.

TAYLOR—(*Starting toward windows*)—Now we've got him.

DUNCAN—And Mr. Harrington's with him.

TAYLOR—What!

DUNCAN—Yes. Gibbs said they were talking together.

TAYLOR—I was right then, Denby is smuggling the necklace for the Harringtons—Harrington didn't go to 'phone—he got a message from Denby. Jim, this is a big job—get out there to make sure he don't escape by the balcony.

DUNCAN—Yes, sir—(*Starts to go.*)

TAYLOR—Wait a minute—give me your gun?—(*Duncan hands him gun and exits with a grin*)—Now he's done for—sure.

ETHEL—(*Crosses to R of table*)—No, no. You mustn't—you mustn't——

TAYLOR—(*Suddenly*)—You knew all the time that he'd got back to his room; you've been trying to fool me—you're stuck on him.

ETHEL—No, no—you're wrong—you're wrong.

TAYLOR—Am I? I'll give you a chance to prove it. Send for Denby, ask him what he did with the necklace—where it is now, tell him that I suspect you—that he's got to tell you the truth—that you won't turn him over to me—talk to him as if you two were alone—but I'll be there behind that screen.—(*Pointing to screen*)—watching and listening.—(*He produces gun*)—and if you tip him off or give him the slightest warning, or signal, I'll arrest you both anyhow. Wrong, am I? We'll see—and if you try to fool me again—you and your sister will have plenty of time to think it over in Auburn. Now send for him.

(*He goes left and gets screen and places it up in corner above door and gets behind it. During foregoing speech Ethel has been very frightened, breathing fast, but as she talks her hand nervously touches box of cigarettes on table. She sees a way out. She musters up all her bravado and courage.*)

ETHEL—Of course I'll send for him.—(*She goes up stage and rings bell and returns to table*)—You'll see you've been all wrong about me.

TAYLOR—(*Snarling*)—I guess not.

(*He adjusts screen a bit so as to see better between the folds.*)

LAMBART—(*Enters*)—Yes, madam.

ETHEL—Mr. Denby's in his room—say that I'm here alone and must speak to him at once.

LAMBART—Yes, madam.—(*He exits upstairs and is heard knocking at a door.*)

TAYLOR—(*Behind screen*)—I can see you perfectly—when Denby comes in, stand where you are, don't move from there. If you do——

LAMBART—(*Coming downstairs*)—Mr. Denby is coming now, madam.—(*Exits R—After a two seconds' pause Denby enters quickly, comes down to her.*)

DENBY—Yes, what's happened. Where is?——

ETHEL—(*Quickly interrupting*)—Will you have a cigarette, Dick?—(*She offers cigarette box.*)

DENBY—(*Realizing her signal, eyes her keenly*)—Thanks, yes, Miss Cartwright.

(*He shows to audience he suspects someone is listening, by looking around the room sharply. He spots screen, suspects that Taylor is there. He does this as he lights cigarette.*)

ETHEL—Now that we're alone and you've beaten me I want you to tell me the truth about the necklace. What did you do with it?

DENBY—(*Calmly*)—Are you still persisting in that strange delusion? I never had a necklace.

ETHEL—But I know you did.

DENBY—Really this is most extraordinary. We went over all that in my room—I thought I'd convinced you.

ETHEL—That agent of the secret service has been here—he suspects that I am defending you for some reason, he won't believe what I say. If you'll tell me the truth I'll make him let you go.

DENBY—Are you quite mad, I haven't any necklace. Really, Miss Cartwright, I don't care to prolong this absurd conversation. (*Lambart enters, crosses to Denby.*)

ETHEL—But what can I do?

LAMBART—Pardon me, sir, but Mr. Vaughan asked me to take this to your room.

DENBY—What is it?

LAMBART—Mr. Vaughan didn't say—except that it was very important for you to get it at once.

(*Lambart hands Denby a package and exits left.*)

DENBY—Curious, what on earth can Monty be sending me at this time of night—it must be important—forgive me if I open it?

(*He does so and lets necklace fall on floor apparently unintentionally—he gives exclamation—hastily picks it up and puts it back in his left hand coat pocket. He is in front of lounge at right.*)

ETHEL—(*Sinking on stool R of table, sobbing*)—Oh, my God—we're done for now.

(*Taylor knocks down screen and comes down front of table with leveled gun.*)

TAYLOR—Hands up, Denby!—(*He blows police whistle.*)—I don't know how you tipped him off but you two are damned smart aren't you?—(*Gibbs and Duncan rush on*)—But I've got you both—you're under arrest. Boys, take her into that room—they can talk without speaking—(*Duncan comes down and gets her. Gibbs crosses to door L, and holds it open*)—I'll question 'em separately—I'll call you when I want you.—(*Duncan, Ethel, and Gibbs exit into library. Ethel is sobbing.*)

TAYLOR—Well, this time I've got you.—(*He comes over with leveled gun*)—Where's the necklace?—(*Denby starts to drop hand to his right hand pocket.*)—No you don't!—(*He puts hand in Denby's right pocket and takes out gun; he smiles at Denby; then Denby lowers hands and produces necklace from left hand pocket.*)

TAYLOR—(*As he looks at it*)—It's a pippin all right—$200,000 for that? How much did you pay the girl to square herself?

DENBY—Not a cent. you're all wrong there.

TAYLOR—Then why did she tip you off just now?

DENBY—She didn't tip me off.

TAYLOR—Can it—can it; why did she?

DENBY—Well, I guess she didn't want to see me go to prison.

TAYLOR—Oh, you pulled the soft stuff eh? Well, she tried to double cross me, and that don't pay, Denby, it don't pay. She'll find it out all right.

DENBY—As long as she did the decent thing by me, I'd like to see her out of it. You've got me, let her go.

TAYLOR—No, you'll both have a nice little trip south to Atlanta for about five years.

DENBY—I guess we're up against it.

TAYLOR—You are, son—right up against it.

DENBY—Take it out on me—ease up on her—she's a woman. After all it isn't as if she were a grafter—why I offered her twenty thousand dollars to square it.

TAYLOR—Tried to bribe a government official eh? That don't make it any better for you.

DENBY—Well, you can't prove it against me.

TAYLOR—(*Curiously*)—Twenty thousand? So you *were* trying to smuggle it for the Harringtons, eh?

DENBY—Suppose we don't mention any names.

TAYLOR—They'll come out in court—twenty thousand—it meant a lot to you—or somebody—to get this through.

DENBY—Yes, but I'd rather pay than go to jail.... see?

TAYLOR—Say, what the hell are you trying to do—bribe me?

DENBY—What an imagination you have—you couldn't be bribed.

TAYLOR—Not on your life.

DENBY—(*Meaningly*)—What a pity I didn't meet a business man instead of *you.*

TAYLOR—You couldn't square it, even with a business man, for $20,000.

DENBY—(*Slowly*)—But I'd give $30,000.

TAYLOR—You would, eh?

DENBY—(*Slowly*)—I would —cash.—(*He fishes down behind his collar and produces three bills*)—Three, $10,000 bills— beauties aren't they?

TAYLOR—(*Hypnotized as he looks at them*)—I didn't know they made 'em so big!

DENBY—Taylor, this talk about my having bought a necklace in Paris, is absurd—I haven't been in Paris in two years.

TAYLOR—(*Slowly*)—You haven't?

DENBY—In case of a come back I have witnesses to prove an alibi.

TAYLOR—(*Slowly*)—You have!

DENBY—How much does the government pay you?

TAYLOR—(*Looking at money, fascinated*)—Three thousand a year.

DENBY—Ten years' salary—And these witnesses of mine—they're reliable witnesses—

TAYLOR—(*Slowly*)—They are?

DENBY—(*Eye to eye*)—Well?

TAYLOR—(*Slowly*)—Well?

DENBY—Ten years' salary.—(*He crackles bills*)—(*A look of understanding between them.*)

TAYLOR—(*Removes his hat and his whole manner changes to one of great geniality*)—Too bad a mistake like this should happen.

DENBY—Just a little inconvenient, sometimes.

TAYLOR—Sorry to have bothered you, Mr. Denby—but you're alright—I figured from the first that you'd be a business man—that's why I let you slide through.

DENBY—You're pretty smart, Mr. Taylor.—(*Holding out money*)—I think these belong to you.

TAYLOR—(*Reaching for money*)—Yes, I think they do—that's a cute little bank you carry 'em in——

DENBY—(*Holding money away*)—Wait a minute. How do I know you won't take the money and then double cross me?

TAYLOR—(*Eagerly*)—I'll give you my word.

DENBY—That security isn't good enough—those two men of yours—are they in on it?

TAYLOR—(*Laughing*)—Not on your life. I haven't split with anybody for five years. This is a one man job, Mr. Denby.

DENBY—How can you square them? They saw you pinch me?

TAYLOR—I'll say it's all a mistake—that I've got to call it off.

DENBY—You're sure you can get away with it?

TAYLOR—I always have.

DENBY—Now see here, this R. J. of the secret service isn't onto you, is he?

TAYLOR—(*Quickly*)—R. J.? What do you know about him?

DENBY—Nothing, only we heard in Paris he was busy over here, investigating this bribery business in the customs.

TAYLOR—Well, don't you worry about him—I'm the guy on this job.

DENBY—But I don't want to give up $30,000, lose the necklace and get pinched as well.

TAYLOR—(*Eagerly*)—Say, if you're scared for fear I'll ball things up, I don't mind admitting to you who R. J. really is—in confidence.

DENBY—Who is he?

TAYLOR—Well, he isn't a thousand miles from here.

DENBY—What?

TAYLOR—Get me?

DENBY—(*Laughing*)—That's funny.

TAYLOR—What's funny about it?

DENBY—Why, R. J.'s supposed to be after the grafters, isn't he, and you're a grafter yourself.

TAYLOR—I'm not a grafter—I'm a business man—I should worry about the government.

DENBY—Well, I guess I'll take the chance.

TAYLOR—That's the idea.

DENBY—Provided you'll let me talk with your men. They've got to understand I'm innocent—They've got to back you up in squaring me with the Harringtons. I'm in rather an awkward fix here just now.

TAYLOR—Why sure—talk your head off to 'em.

DENBY—You'll leave the girl out of it?

TAYLOR—(*Grinning*)—I'll do more than that—I'll leave the girl to you.

DENBY—Well, here's your money.

TAYLOR—Much obliged—and, anyhow, I've got no evidence that you ever had a necklace—(*He returns necklace*)—Have a cigar, Mr. Denby——

DENBY—(*Taking it*)—Thanks; now call 'em in.

TAYLOR—(Certainly.—(*Going to center—then turning*)—Glad to have met you—next time you're landing in New York and I can be of use—you know—— (*Calling*)—Duncan! Gibbs!—(*Gibbs, Ethel and Duncan enter in order named*)—Say, boys, it's all a mistake!

DUNCAN & GIBBS, ETHEL—(*Under her breath*), TAYLOR (TOGETHER) — What? Thank God.

TAYLOR—Our dope was phony—we were in all wrong, but he's been very nice about it—very nice indeed. It's just a case of mistaken identity—but he's all right—let the lady go, boys.

(*Ethel goes down L to fender, Gibbs crosses to right upper, and Duncan to lower left of table.*)

DENBY—(*Crossing up C*)—Now I don't want any come back to all this—I want you all to understand the facts, if you don't mind waiting, Miss Cartwright.

ETHEL—Of course I'll wait.

TAYLOR—Listen to him boys—you see he's anxious to straighten things out. So tell him anything he wants to know.—(*To Denby*)—Fire ahead.—(*Taylor behind lounge R.*)

DENBY—(*To Duncan*)—Well, you got a tip from Harlow that a Steven Denby had bought a necklace at Cartiers'——

DUNCAN—Yes, sir.

DENBY—(*To Gibbs*)—Then you got a wireless that Denby had sailed with a Mrs. Harrington, which threw suspicion on her as a possible smuggler.

GIBBS—That's right, too.

DENBY—And yet you fellows let Denby slip through the lines at the pier to-day without a search—why was that?

TAYLOR—(*Worried*)—We didn't have any absolute evidence to arrest him on——

DENBY—But after he got through—you received an anonymous telegram late this afternoon that Denby carried the necklace in a tobacco pouch, didn't you?

TAYLOR—How did you know that?

DENBY—Oh, I found it out to-night.

TAYLOR—(*Coming to him*)—What is all this, anyhow?

DENBY—You don't object to your men answering my questions?—(*Meaningly*)—I was pretty nice to you, Mr. Taylor.

TAYLOR—(*Embarrassed, feeling the money in his trouser pocket*)—No, that's alright—go ahead.—(*He returns behind couch.*)

DENBY—(*To Gibbs*)—You knew about that tip in the telegram?

GIBBS—No, this is the first we've heard of it.

DENBY—(*To Taylor*)—Oh, you didn't tell them?

TAYLOR—That was my own business.

DENBY—Did it ever occur to you boys that it was rather peculiar that this supposed smuggler wasn't searched—that he got through without the slightest trouble?

GIBBS—Why, the Chief didn't want to get in any mix up with the Harringtons, in case he was wrong about Denby.

DENBY—Oh, that's what he told you?

DUNCAN—It sure was.

DENBY—Don't you boys know the whole job looks very much as if the scheme was to let Denby slip through and then blackmail him?

DUNCAN—I never thought of that.

GIBBS—Me neither.

TAYLOR—(*Nervously*)—What's all this got to do with you? I admit we made a mistake and we're sorry about it. That's all—come on you fellows.

DENBY—Just a moment—(*To Duncan and Gibbs*)—Don't you realize that it's rather a dangerous thing to monkey with the United States government—it's a pretty big thing to fool with. You might have got into serious trouble, arresting the wrong man, as you have me?

GIBBS—I haven't been monkeyin' with the government.

DUNCAN—Neither have I.

TAYLOR—But it's all settled, now that we know you never had a necklace.

DENBY—That's clearly understood?

TAYLOR—What I say is right.

DENBY—But you see, boys, he's wrong. I did smuggle a necklace through the customs to-day.—(*He shows it.*)

DUNCAN & GIBBS
TAYLOR } What?

TAYLOR—(*Quickly*)—Then you're under arrest.

DENBY—Oh, no, I'm not.—(*To others*)—He caught me with the goods and I paid him $30,000, to square it.

TAYLOR—(*Comes threateningly to him; with upraised fist*)—Why—you—I'll——

DENBY—(*Pulling down his hand*)—You won't do anything—you're only a bully—you couldn't graft on your own—you had to drag a girl into it—you made me do some pretty rotten things to-night to land you. I've had to make that girl suffer, but now you're going to pay for it. I've got you—you're under arrest.

TAYLOR—Aw, quit your bluffin'—you can't arrest me, Denby.

DENBY—I'm not Denby—my name is Jones.

TAYLOR—Well, who the hell is he?

DENBY—Oh yes—I'd almost forgotten—you and the boys don't know who I really am—here's my commission.—(*Handing Gibbs parchment*)—That's my photograph—a fairly good likeness, isn't it?

DUNCAN—(*Who has crossed hurriedly to Gibbs L*) Yes.

GIBBS—Sure. Why this thing's made out to Richard Jones.

DENBY—Well, do you get the initials, boys?

DUNCAN & GIBBS—(*Reading initials without realizing their significance*)—R. J.

DENBY—That's me, R. J., of the United States secret service.

GIBBS—(*Shakes hands with Denby*)—Are you really R. J.?

DENBY—(*Smiling*)—I am afraid I am.

TAYLOR—It's a lie!

DENBY—(*Pointing to paper*)—You can't get away from that signature—it's signed by the President of the United States.

TAYLOR—I tell you it's a fake.

DENBY—They don't seem to think so.

DUNCAN—This is on the level alright.—(*Gibbs looking at it with him, takes it.*)

DENBY—Taylor, for three years the government has been trying to land the big blackmailer in the customs—we set a trap for him with a necklace as bait. The whole thing was a plant—from Harlow's tip to my dropping the necklace just now—and you walked into it.

TAYLOR—(*Coming to him threatingly*)—Say, you can't get away with this.

DENBY—Wait a minute. You've been in the service long enough to know that the rough stuff won't go—you'll only get the worst of it—so take it easy.—(*To Duncan & Gibbs; taking commission from Gibbs*)—Take him along boys—I was mighty glad to find out just now that you fellows weren't in on it—keep the necklace for me—exhibit A—they're fakes.—(*He comes down to R of table.*)

GIBBS—And I've been working for a crook for two years and never knew it.—(*Gibbs & Duncan cross over near windows.*)

TAYLOR—(*Goes down to Denby furiously*)—Damn you, you've got me alright, but I'll send that girl and her sister up the river. I'll get even—you're stuck on her and she goes with me.

DENBY—Oh, I think not. You forget that Mr. Harrington's vice-president of the New York Burglar Insurance Company, and a very good friend of Miss Cartwright's. I saw him upstairs.

ETHEL—(*Under her breath*)—Oh, thank God.

TAYLOR—Oh, get me out of this.—(*Up C.*)

DENBY—Oh, just a minute—I'll trouble you for that $30,000.

TAYLOR—(*Turning*)—You think of everything, don't you?

DENBY—(*To Ethel*)—You see I borrowed it from Monty—he's been a great help as an amateur partner.—(*To Taylor*)—He'll be glad you're out of the way, Taylor. You quite frightened him.

TAYLOR—(*Going to him*)—There's your thirty thousand.

DENBY—(*Goes to him*)—There's your cigar.

TAYLOR—(*Sticking cigar in his pocket—then with bravado*)—Well, it took the biggest man in the secret service to land me, Mr. R. J. But I've got some mighty good pals in some mighty good places, who'll come across for me. After all—you're not the jury and all the smart lawyers aren't dead yet.

GIBBS—Aw, come on, you dirty grafter.—(*The three exit at French windows.*)

DENBY—I'm sorry I had to leave you alone as I did, but I wanted to arrange matters with Mr. Harrington about your sister, so Taylor would have no come back.

ETHEL—So you are really R. J.

DENBY—I really am. I did want to tell you before, but I couldn't be sure you weren't Taylor's accomplice, until you told me about your sister. I had my job to do for the United States—I'm only a soldier—I was under orders, but I wish I hadn't had to make you suffer.

ETHEL—And everything's all right now?

DEMBY—Except that I'm hungry—are you hungry?

ETHEL—Starved!

DENBY—Let's ask for some food. I haven't been so hungry since Paris.

ETHEL—I wish it were Paris!

DEMBY—It will be whenever you say, and I'll tell you all about R. J.

ETHEL—How silly of me to think that you were a criminal.

DENBY—But you see you've caught me.

ETHEL—Have I really got you, Steve?—(*She goes in his arms as*

The CURTAIN Falls.

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